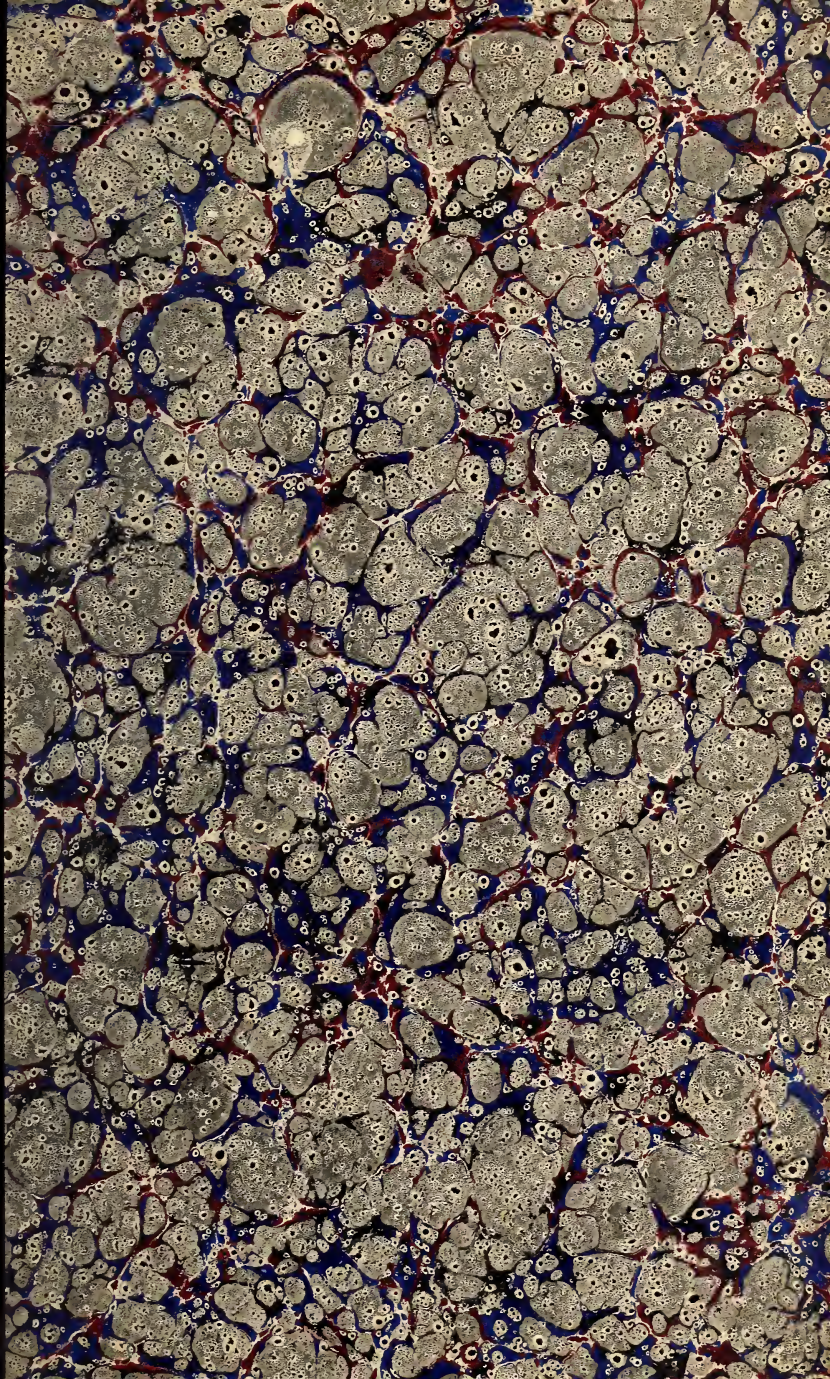
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. BR121

No. .U4

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



The Catholic Series.

☞ For Prospectus indicating the character and purpose of the Catholic Series, and for List of Books already published, see Catalogue at the end of this work.

THE

WORSHIP OF GENIUS,

AND THE

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER,

OR

ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

By PROF. C. ULLMANN.

Translated from the German,

By LUCY SANFORD.

"The Worship of Genius has its truth and its justice as opposed to something lower, but is untrue and unjust as opposed to something higher; it is beautiful and praiseworthy as a natural enthusiasm for the highest manifestations of the human intellect; but reprehensible and destructive as a substitute for the worship of God, and for the true living Christian faith."—PAGE 5-6.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN, BROTHERS, 121, NEWGATE STREET.

M.DCCC.XLVI.

1846

BT121
.24

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE former of these Essays is taken from a pamphlet, published in 1840, which also contained G. Schwab's Speech at the Inauguration of the Statue of Schiller; his Reply to Ullmann's Letter; and his Essay on "Schiller and Christianity." These have not been thought of sufficient general interest to render a translation desirable. But Ullmann's Essay "On the Distinctive Character, or Essence of Christianity," though published at a later period, appears suitably appended to the former, not merely from its similarity in subject and spirit, but because, while the first is directed chiefly to eradicate error, the second, according to Luther's great principle, quoted by Ullmann, aims at supplying its place with truth.

The style of the original, which permitted some degree of compression, has prevented the translation from being *in every part* strictly literal; but it is hoped that the author's ideas, and their connexion, have been closely followed, and his *words* no more altered than the preservation of that connexion required.

London, June 6th, 1846.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

I. THE WORSHIP OF GENIUS. A LETTER TO GUSTAVUS SCHWAB 1

II. SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS.

1. The modern "Worship of Genius" and the ancient Genii-worship 49
2. On the existence of a law for the periodical appearance of Men of Genius 52

III. THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. General view of the object of the work . . . 63
2. The different stages of development through which Christianity itself has passed. The same phases perceptible in the views which have been successively taken of it . 67
3. Christianity as Doctrine. Under this head are comprised both Supernaturalism and Naturalism . . . 72
4. Christianity as a Moral Law. The philosophy of Kant; Rationalism 79
5. Christianity as the Religion of Redemption. Schleiermacher's definition 85
6. The peculiar significance and influence of Christ's individual character 88
7. The views of Hegel and his school 90
8. Christ as the exemplification of the union of the Divine and Human in one character 95
9. Importance of this truth for the definition of the distinctive Character of Christianity . . . 97
10. Christianity as the Perfect Religion . . . 99
11. Inferences from the preceding 101
12. Retrospect and epitome of the argument . . 104
13. Application of the preceding to the idea of Faith . . 106
14. Application to the Church 111

THE

WORSHIP OF GENIUS.

BY

PROF. C. ULLMANN.

PREFACE.

To many who take up this work for the first time its title may appear to want unity, or be even wholly incomprehensible. A few words on the origin of the article may therefore vindicate the connexion and force of the prefix which has been chosen.

Dr. Strauss, in his article on "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," which appeared in the *Freihafen* Journal, towards the end of the summer of 1838, had declared, that to our age of religious disorganization nothing was left but a *worship of genius;* that is, a reverence for those great spirits who form epochs in the progress of the human race, and in whom, taken collectively, the godlike manifests itself to us most fully; he had even included Christianity under this worship of genius, by assigning to its founder the first place among those men of genius who have promoted human progress. In the spring of 1839 was celebrated the inauguration of the statue of Schiller at Stutgart; and my friend Schwab, as an orator, expressed, in language worthy of the subject, the national feelings of veneration for the immortal poet. Little as had been the cause given for the suspicion, either by the originators of the festival, or by the speaker, this act of homage to the memory of the poet was regarded as an act of religious worship, as an idolatry of genius. These words of Strauss, and this homage to genius, entering my mind one day at the same time, suggested the idea of a letter on the worship of genius, which I therefore addressed to the friend who had spoken beside the statue of Schiller.

The question was not now, whether he who first expressed in plain words the idea of a worship of genius, still remained firm in that opinion, or even considered it of importance; for our concern was not with an individual, but with a principle. It is well known, that before the appearance of the article on "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," many intellectual persons of both sexes, either humble kindred or honoured chiefs of our high aristocracy of mind, knew and practised no other worship than that of genius; and that this religion, notwithstanding, or, perhaps, *owing to* its ætherial and unsubstantial character, will retain its followers, even if he who coined the name for them should desert it. His words found a response in many quarters, for the very reason, that they gave a more definite expression to an already existing state of feeling, of which it thus promoted the progress. The affair, however, afforded me a welcome opportunity of pursuing yet further one branch of my remarks on Strauss's Christology.*

I have added some Supplementary Remarks, forming an Appendix, upon those points which could not conveniently receive further elucidation in the letter.†

C. ULLMANN.

Heidelberg, March, 28, 1840.

* The former essays with which the the present discussion is connected, are:— Historisch oder Mythisch? — Beiträge zur Beantwortung der gegenwärtigen Lebensfrage in der Theologie. Hamburg, bei Fr. Perthes, 1838; and particularly the Sendschreiben an Strauss über the Persönlichkeit und Wunder Christi. S. 89-180.

† Some portions of the Preface having reference only to Schwab and his contribution to the volume, as it appears in the German, have been omitted.

THE

WORSHIP OF GENIUS.

[A LETTER TO GUSTAV. SCHWAB.]

How often, formerly, my dear friend,—when seated together after the labours of the day, with others of congenial spirit, in one of the most social rooms of that Tübingen institution, from which so much that is important, not in theology alone, has proceeded,—have we refreshed ourselves by the communication of whatever was stirring in heart and brain! Even in later days, the happiness of intercourse with you has often been granted me; and thus I have acquired the habit of living in intimate communion with you, and of imparting and discussing mentally even what we could not converse upon in person. But the inner language sometimes calls for outward expression; and you will therefore permit me, since communication by word of mouth is for the present denied us, to address myself to you this once before the public. The subject, too, is one of general interest, while many points prompt me to refer myself to you in particular. My mind has been for some time occupied by that which gives the title to these pages; which by a voice of much influence has been not merely proposed, but announced as already existing: the *worship of genius*. You know what has been said upon it by the celebrated author of the "Life of Jesus," in his article on

"The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," which has been separately printed, in connexion with the charming and characteristic description of our friend Kerner. "The only worship," he writes,—"we may lament or rejoice, but we cannot deny it,—the only worship left to the cultivated of this age from the religious disorganization of the last, is the worship of genius." Plainly, and without circumlocution, this worship is designated as a new Paganism or Catholicism, which has come over Protestant Germany; since, as if one human manifestation of the Deity were not enough, men now require, after the Indian fashion, a succession of incarnations; the solitary majesty of Jesus is thus once more encircled with a halo of saints, "only that these are certainly not exactly the saints of the church; but, as in the private chapel of Alexander Severus, the statue of Orpheus stood beside those of Abraham and Christ, so the tendency of the present day is, to revere the Deity as manifested in all spirits which have exercised a vivifying and creative influence upon mankind."

I need not tell you, dear friend,—we, and all of our contemporaries who are alive to the impressions of the present, have often felt it, sometimes with sorrow, sometimes with hope,—that our age is employed in the solution of a great riddle; it seeks for satisfaction in something new; and has at least not yet found true expression, appealing to universal consciousness, for that which may again unite, and permanently inspire, the minds of men. What, then, if the words "Worship of Genius" contained the solution of the problem? One is certainly, and with justice, prejudiced beforehand against a worship which is *invented*; and such modes of worship have always, as with the Theo-philanthropists and the St. Simonians, shown themselves, precisely *because* invented, rootless and ephemeral. But the worship of genius, say its followers, needs not to be formed; it has already formed itself; it is the only one which the great religious ruin has left to the cultivated; it is forced upon us by necessity, if we would not wholly close our minds

to what is above us. Yes; this worship, even if we are disposed to see in it, not the glowing dawn of a better age, but the mournful hues of the departed day, is already in existence among us; and you, my Stuttgart friends, I might continue, have celebrated its first great festival. Your homage to Schiller was the explicit national inauguration of this worship; and thou, dear friend, obeying the universal impulse of the times, and thus, without, perhaps, distinctly wishing or intending it, sympathizing with the author of the Life of Jesus, didst stand as a worthy priest below the statue of the immortal poet to whom these first-fruits were offered. The people of every class bore their part, forming the first free congregation of the new church; and ancient Suabia, the scene of so much that has been important to church and state, to science and poetry, has now become the cradle of this new faith. But how? Suabia, the better part of whose sons cling with such serious rational devotion to the faith received from their fathers; that Suabia, known before all countries of Protestant Germany for her adherence to Christianity and the church; can she thus suddenly have embraced the worship of genius, so infinitely differing from all which she has hitherto held holy? If we examine beyond appearances it can surely not be so. For had the question been asked of those present on the occasion, the great majority would certainly have protested against the idea of holding a festival of genius, with the design of making this service a substitute for their religion; and thou, my friend, wouldst have been the first to protest against such an interpretation—nay, thou didst so unasked; for at the conclusion of thy beautiful speech, worthy alike of the Christian preacher and the poet, it is not to genius that the highest honour is ascribed, but to Him from whom genius proceeds. But what would have been the ground of such a protest? Is it that what has been called the universally-received worship of genius, has in reality no truth and no significance? Yet it *has* a truth, which was at once the justification and the

inspiration of that day's great national expression, in which doubtless innumerable individuals, who could not take part outwardly, did so in spirit; but the same thing, when taken as a substitute for religion, is false and wrong; and this is the imputation from which you would have defended yourselves, and indeed have indirectly done so. This I would fain make, by my present address to you, more clear to myself, and perhaps to others also; hoping that where you do not agree with me, you will be stimulated to substitute something better in itself and better expressed.

The Worship of Genius, in the widest sense, we may define as that deep, enthusiastic homage, amounting to the highest veneration, which we pay to the most important and influential manifestations of the human mind, or to those individuals who, in whatever sphere of life, in the departments of art, of science, of politics, morals, or religion, have contributed in some new and extraordinary manner to its development;—in a word, the greatest possible veneration for great men and their performances; a veneration which, when of the right kind, prompts appropriate manifestations of respect to such individuals, and stimulates him who entertains it to similar exertions, so far as his abilities permit. Reverence for great actions and great men, understood in this general sense, is, as I need not observe to you, my friend, nothing new. The nations of antiquity, especially the Greeks and Romans, were devoted to it; and even in the Christian world it is not extinct. Every human being who is awake to a higher consciousness,—every nation which has a history, and lives therein, nourishes and cultivates this reverence; the public monuments of all ages, which recal the memory of great men—Westminster Abbey—the Valhalla, to which we Germans are looking—are evident signs of its existence. The only novelty lies in the attempt to make this worship a substitute for the true religion, and a remedy for the evils occasioned by the decay of the latter. Yet even this is not wholly

new. A worship of genius, even in this sense, has no doubt been silently practised by not a few in modern times. For to how many of our western neighbours has Napoleon really become a god; and to how many Germans remains no higher object of enthusiasm and devotion than Göthe! Indeed, something of the sort has been before expressed, though in a different spirit and connexion. I would here recal to your recollection only one of the first writers of our nation. Jean Paul, in his article entitled "Wishes for a Monument to Luther," not only says, "Yes; would Germany only build national capitals, and construct and consecrate therein something more sublime than a Westminster Abbey—since *there* rank and riches take the same station as *worth*—namely, a rotunda of the mighty dead; whither could the youth make a nobler pilgrimage than to these holy graves?—where could he catch so well the living fire which should preserve him through the cold world?" —but he adds, still more significantly, in actual anticipation of the worship of genius, "If one religion and one doctrine after another, which elevates man to spirit, yields to the attacks of time, build at least temples to *men*, wherein the spiritually great may remind us of the greatest, and *admiration*, of *prayer*. But though such things have been thus practised in fact, and expressed definitely and confidently in words, though they have been thus philosophically examined, and with such especial reference to the founder of Christianity himself,—it has never before been declared, as now, that the worship of genius is the only form of devotion remaining, or truly applicable to our age.

We are thus led to treat of the worship of genius in a twofold sense—according to its general meaning, as it has been always more or less practised, and according to the special interpretation which some now seek to put upon it. And with reference to this distinction, my judgment, which I hope you will approve, is in general terms as follows:—The worship of genius has its truth and its justice as opposed to something lower, but is untrue and unjust as opposed to

something higher; it is beautiful and praiseworthy as a natural enthusiasm, for the highest manifestations of the human intellect; but reprehensible and destructive as a substitute for the worship of God, and for the true living Christian faith.

There is, indeed, a tendency, and a very prevalent one, in contradistinction to which we may well desire nothing so much as a very general worship of genius. A poet needs only to be reminded with one word of that "resistance of the soul-less world," which hitherto the best and greatest have had to endure; and he will assuredly hail, as glorious, the time when a deep, joyful, intelligent reverence, not merely of talents and accomplishments, but of that far higher attribute, creative genius, shall be universal. You, yourself, in your speech, designated utility as the idol of the world, to which all powers pay tribute and all talents do homage. And when we add to this, pleasure—either wholly sensual, or, if of an intellectual character, diluted as far as possible with sense—we have the supreme deities of the age, compared with whom, genius appears a divine existence, and its worship as something infinitely sublime. That service of the appetites, coarser or more refined, which lives only for the moment,—that gross egotism which exists only in the narrow circle of self, or in the little-enlarged self of the most immediate connexions,—that utilitarian spirit, the mental mildew of our time, which computes the progress of the world only according to the number of spinning and silk-machines, of steamboats and railroads,—even that more refined voluptuousness, which loads talent, when cultivated into accomplishment, with gold and honours, because it flatters the senses, and shortens the otherwise vacant, halting moments; all these would be at once elevated to a sort of religion, to something above themselves, if the worship of genius dawned upon them. Men would divine that there is somewhat higher in the world than can be eaten or measured, counted and calculated, enjoyed by the eye or ear without deeper thought or feeling; the mysterious

something, which bursts forth from unknown depths, and reveals itself where it will—*spirit;* they would, after having learnt to acknowledge and admire the mysterious origin and operations of the human mind, be more easily brought to recognise a supreme creative power, of whom human thinkers and inventors present only a feeble image; and to raise their eyes to the spiritual sun, of whom men of genius are but single rays of variously obscured brightness. Contrasted with this materialism, however refined, there is something really refreshing and elevating to hear how, in a kindred city of the north, the greatest sculptor of our day has been welcomed by the enthusiastic love of a whole people, as triumphantly as the most beloved prince: even considered by itself, it is a sublime manifestation. We there see that the divinely-ennobled kings of the intellectual kingdom find their claims allowed; and we can but rejoice at such homage paid to genius, as a noble proof of the higher spiritual capacities of our contemporaries.

As opposed, also, to heartless ingratitude, the worship of genius is something beautiful and desirable. For there are certainly many whose minds are capable of recognising genius, but who pay no homage to it in their hearts. They view the activity of those spirits which labour for the true and beautiful as an amusing sport, as brilliant fireworks displayed before them and for them, without any feelings of peculiar attachment or interest for the performers being excited in their minds. Intellectual productions are to them as flowers whose perfume refreshes them for a while; but the idea never strikes them, that these are the gifts of a living hand. They rejoice in the work, and it never occurs to them to thank, honour, and love the author. And yet to do so is not only possible, but it is a duty. Genius, not only in its productions, but in its spiritual identity—in the central point of its individual existence, deserves an honest, heartfelt homage; certainly not in the sense of those whose almost unquestioning admiration would make genius, with whatever moral faults and weak-

nesses, the object of unqualified veneration, and thus introduce an idolatry of great men, which would encroach on the claims of a better worship; but, regarding even the very highest manifestations of the human intellect (which furnish at once proofs of a divine superintendence, and vital energy for the noblest developments of humanity) as *personal* attainments, we should take the possessor more closely to our hearts, and embrace him with sympathising human love as an individual of our own species, who by labours and struggles has triumphantly glorified his nature. And, for the most part, what we call genius is a hazardous gift to the possessor. Genius wears, indeed, a blythe and careless aspect; but—the internal and external history of men of genius proves it, and the very poet to whom you have raised a monument is the most convincing example of the fact—it is scarcely ever unfolded inwardly and outwardly without severe struggles and sufferings. Those who "wander in the torrid climes of fame" must shed many bitter sweat-drops; and almost every one who, in any one department, has reached the summit of human development, has, in some other way, done penance for his superabundant powers, and paid, with heavy interest, the debt which he owed to finite humanity. For these mental labours, then,—for these struggles and sufferings, without which the highest qualities of our nature cannot be developed,—men of true genius, who elevate the existence of our race, have a right to our gratitude, to our *personal* gratitude, such as we feel for a benefactor. This affectionate homage is assuredly far more moral—aye, if you will, far more pious—than the proud, cold *objectiveness*, which forgets the artist in the work, and is but another name for heartlessness or overweening egotism. Very differently from those who honour not genius, least they should trench upon their own honours—who love it not because they love themselves too well—have the most excellent persons ever thought and felt; genius has been to them the object of personal reverence and love, and the scenes of its life or acts have

been held by them as sacred. Very differently did you also express yourself, when you designated the statue of the great poet, to whom a personal homage was thereby intended, as "an object of pilgrimage for the love and reverence of nations." In this sense, you too, my friend, must approve the worship of genius, and wish it more and more widely diffused among the unsympathising multitude, and in the bosoms of the proud and self-absorbed.

In the last place, my friend, will you not agree with me if I say that the worship of genius is right, as opposed to a certain pious scrupulosity and dogmatic narrowness of views? I know that this is a delicate point, on which opinions at once divide. But we must not therefore pass it over. A sharp, searching contest has been here carried on, especially in our latter days. One party says, genius, unique in its species, and marked by the very rarity of its appearance as something extraordinary, is not to be measured by the common moral standard; it has, as in its productions, so in its life, which is the basis of those productions, its own laws and privileges; from its creations we can require only beauty, life, and harmony; the demands of faith and morality transplant the question to another sphere, and can only confuse the judgment. The others answer, there are no exceptional laws for the greatest, more than for the ordinary members of humanity; the eternal truths of faith, and the irrefragable ordinances of morality are, like the laws of natural life, valid for all; and their authority is as unqualified over genius, as over the meanest individual who bears the image of his Maker; —nay, the endowment of genius, so far from justifying a violation of these eternal ordinances, imposes upon superior talents a stronger obligation to serve more gladly the Highest, and to give in all things honour to the Name which is above every name. Even the works of genius cannot be excepted from these laws; they are worthy of their origin, only when they mirror to us the godlike,—when they are steeped in the

spirit of piety and morality; and inasmuch as Christianity involves in itself the perfection of piety and moral life, in the spirit of Christianity nothing is beautiful but what is good;—but what, in the Christian world, is *Christian*. These two opposite principles have been so far carried out, and applied to the actual relations of life, that the first has given birth to an immoral laxity in men of genius, or those who deem themselves such, towards their beloved self; a frivolous idolatry of genius, and a *bel-esprit* libertinism: from the latter has proceeded a narrow moral rigour, perhaps often a well-meant, but bigoted intolerance towards all manifestations of intellect, undistinguished by any definite badge of party or opinion. The earnestness and strict morality of our nation will prevent it, as a body, from falling into the former error; while its intellectual freshness and activity, the liberal, though deep and serious character of its piety, must preserve it from the second. Nor is either of *us*, my dear friend, likely to be seduced into the exaggerations or distortions of either tendency, whether the aspect assumed by them be specious or threatening; but nothing shall hinder us from paying avowed and honest respect to acknowledged truth. Thus, if the question be simply: Is genius, as such, exempt from the obligations of faith and morality?—I am certain that you will agree with me in giving a decided negative. The man of genius is subject, like all others, to the eternal laws of humanity in all his proceedings; his honour, his peculiar office, consist not in transgressing these laws, but in showing them forth, making them clear to the apprehension of others, and strengthening their influence on the present and the future race; in aiding to promote "the triumph of true beauty in the universe," of that beauty, which, willed by God, is indissolubly connected with truth and goodness; the triumph of the holy and the eternal. Were we to pronounce otherwise, it could only be on the supposition that men of genius form a peculiar species in the human family, and are exceptional, from their birth, in moral and religious

constitution. But for this we have not the smallest evidence. We have neither cause to regard them, in this sense, as peculiarly favoured individuals, exempt from the common necessity of struggle and development; nor are we justified in considering genius as a force of gravity, dragging its possessors down to earth, or as an impetus inevitably urging them into the career of passion; as anything, in short, which necessarily loosens the common ties of humanity. I cannot express the pain which I felt when I read, in the words of a young poet, not without abilities, and a friend of yours, the unqualified expression, "Poetry's signet is the brand of Cain;" for truly on the forehead of one marked out for poetry, or any other great intellectual task, shines somewhat very different from the brand of Cain. Thus men of genius, as such, stand neither above nor below the line of ordinary human responsibility in moral and religious matters. With them, as with other mortals, the measure of moral and religious capacities and susceptibility will be found to correspond to their intellectual power;* and they thus stand in the same relation as all others to God and His law. But this principle, in itself true and indubitable, must not be applied in an abstract, narrow, petty sense; and two considerations must always be borne in mind: —first, that we must not confound the work immediately committed to creative genius with the mediate results of its labours; and next, that a distinction must be made between what may be called the spirit of a living, essentially Christian piety, and any definite code of faith and morals adapted to the necessities of the present time. Most certainly the Beautiful, considered in itself, cannot, in the remotest degree, form a contrast to the Good. When they are separated, it is attributable either to the imperfection of human nature, or to sin, or moral perversion of some kind; but their origin is the same, for both are rooted in the Divine. God may as fitly be named essential beauty as essential good: love is beautiful in proportion as it is good and true: the idea of the Holy is

involved in those of the True, the Good, the Beautiful. If this reasoning applies to God, the Archetype, it is equally true of the creation, which is the copy of his perfections. Moral perfection, by its vital energy and exact proportions, makes always the impression of beauty; and the highest beauty will always bear the stamp of morality, and work upon those who receive it in the true spirit a moral, that is, an elevating, liberating, purifying effect. In this sense, the poet or artist who realises the ideal of his character, is ever at the same time a sage—the instructor of his people and of mankind, by cultivating that higher sense within them which is adapted to the perception of divine things; he does this, however, not as a formal moral or religious pedagogue, in direct didactic wise, but as it were, unintentionally, through the pure worship of the beautiful, and by the life-giving inspiring influence, which, without effort on his own part, attends the labours of him who exercises this worship in a devoted spirit. For while his creations reflect the world of the beautiful and the sublime, which in their essence cannot be separated from the true and the good, he can hardly fail of exercising a corresponding influence on piety and morality. He prepares the minds of men for the reception of the Ideal, and thus for that of the Good and the True. Much, certainly, depends on our allowing every work of art to operate upon us a whole, and submitting ourselves to the spirit of genius in its entireness. By this entireness alone can the effect which it aims at be comprehended; and details, which, considered separately, bear, perhaps, the semblance of immorality, may, as subservient members of a higher organization, attain a perfectly moral character. If the work of art—the tragedy, for example—is to be an image or reflection of the world—an idealized reflection it may be, but still a *reflection* of the actual world—then must *evil*, since it exists in reality, be presented also in the work of art. But the representation, while confined within the limits of the beautiful, will be as far from corrupting or polluting a work of

human art, as the actual evil in the world can destroy or pollute *that* sublime work of art; provided always, that in the artist and his work that spirit predominates, which knows how to assign to evil and immorality their proper place, and to pronounce thereon, not in reflections or edifying speeches, but by the development of the subject—the judgment of the eternal Nemesis. This, too, we have a right to demand from creative genius: if it present the world to view, it must present also its highest order, and its inviolable laws; if it conduct us, like Dante, to the gulf of hell, it must afterwards lift us to the heights of paradise; if it paint the surface or the dark abyss of evil, we must, at the same time, perceive and learn thereby that the Divine and the Good are the true existences, the only permanently victorious principles.

If we thus comprehend in this sense the *whole* of an intellectual production, the work of a poet or an artist, there is certainly once more a double possibility; it may present itself to us, either as a spirit in close and joyful alliance with the Eternal and the Divine, with the world of spirit and of thought, with the everlasting laws of justice and morality; or as one opposed, perhaps intentionally hostile to all these. In the first case our course is plain; we can unhesitatingly pay to genius the deepest reverence, as to every ray of the Good or the Holy which sheds its cheering radiance on this mortal world. We need not stop to enquire whether the poet and his work are in exact accordance with *our* doctrinal views; nay, we need not even enquire anxiously as to his faith in Christianity; for, supposing him to belong to the ante-christian world, or even, though living under the Christian dispensation, not to have yet penetrated into the sanctuary of a living faith in the Redeemer;—whether by his own fault, or, as most frequently happens, by that of his age;—he yet, in his works, paves the way for that faith; inasmuch as all things beautiful and harmonious, all things bearing testimony, however generally, to the divine origin and immortal destiny of man, have some

affinity with the highest truth; are rays of that light, which dawned upon all mankind in Christ. No rational person will dispute, that we must keep our sense open to true beauty and grandeur, even when nurtured by a different religious soil; not only must Job and the Psalms be familiar to us, but we must keep unimpaired our full sensibility to the beauties of Homer and Sophocles; however their ideas on moral and religious subjects may differ from our own, we cannot fail to perceive in them a deep, earnest sense of the Divine; a sense which often breaks forth in expressions pregnant with the highest meaning. And though all the glorious works of antiquity had their source in views of the divine nature which we can no longer share, it would be unjust on our part not to discriminate between these errors and that inner meaning, embodied with such unsurpassable skill in those imperishable works of art; if the beauty of an Apollo or the sublimity of a Jupiter inspired no other feeling than that said to have been expressed by Pope Adrian VI., when shown for the first time the Museum of the Vatican, "They are idols of the heathen." But in the Christian world also we meet with representations of the beautiful, which are not, like the poems of Dante and Klopstock, addressed immediately to the highest Christian conception, but which yet, as true expressions of human nature, have their value and beneficial influence. For as piety should not close the eyes of men in general to the great free world of God, neither should it seal those of the artist or the poet, who are specimens of man in his fullest development and consciousness. There is, indeed, a *worldly* art, which is as far from being impious or impure as that uncorrupted nature of which it is the spiritual image. In the world we see, apart from what is evil, much which does not bear precisely the badge of faith or Christianity; all things do not teach, preach, and edify; some things are not even useful; there are gay flowers and butterflies, and much besides which comes before us only as a sportive freak of fancy, and which

yet could not be spared, if the world is to be rich and manifold as we find it; if that *something* in the mind—so apparently lawless, yet so grand and orderly in its operations—which we call imagination, is to have its sphere of action. If God has not disdained to give these things a place in his creation, let us also allow to genius its free play of fancy, which gives gaiety and freshness to the often insipid world; which frees the shackled and raises the depressed: let us permit the poet, if he brings his individuality with him, to expatiate unrestrained in dreams and reveries; for, precisely because life is so serious, the complete harmony cannot be preserved without the light fantastic sports of jest, wit, and humour, whose lightning flash, like magic influence, clears the laden air. All this—I need only refer to Hippel, Claudius, and Hebel,—does not exclude higher things: an outpouring of genius, having no such purpose, and tending in quite another direction, will often excite and quicken, in a thoughtful mind, the idea of the divine: to him whose course is once directed upwards, anything may become a step of the ladder by which he climbs to the highest; all is good which in the true sense is beautiful and lovely. But here we certainly have always one thing to consider; not all poetical dreams and fancies are good; this depends upon *who* is the dreamer, and what is the character and habit of that mind which forms the background to these bright or gloomy figures; for here also may be said, to the pure all things are pure, but to the impure *nothing* is pure, and the offspring of such a mind will always retain some taint from their birth-place. What we have said must, therefore, be taken with the proviso that the general tendency of the gifted mind, in itself and its labours, be towards the eternal, the true, and the good; that it be characterized by what the ancients so strikingly denominated *beautiful goodness*. But how when the contrary is the case? When the man of genius sets himself, like Prometheus, in opposition to divine authority; when the centripetal force,

which draws all created beings with mysterious attraction to the spiritual sun, is overbalanced by the centrifugal force of selfishness, worldly-mindedness, or sin; when genius, like the fallen child of a higher race, wanders the farther from the path of light, in proportion to the richness of its endowments and the sublimity of its original destination? Shall we then still reverence it; and does the worship of genius embrace alike the good and the bad, if it be only powerful and commanding? Is this homage, the spiritual hero worship, at times also the worship of demons? No, my friend, under these conditions we can assuredly not revere genius; for reverence is due only to that which in the fuller, even in the ethical sense, is an image of the Divine. But shall we immediately hurl against it a sentence of condemnation? You, my dear friend, will agree with me in recommending moderation and warning against violence. In the first place, it is difficult to decide whether a mind has really entered upon this false course. The inner spiritual life of an individual has always its own impenetrable mystery, and so much the more in proportion to the elevation of the spirit which we seek to estimate. The higher and more original a mind is, the more strongly is it usually attracted towards the highest originating creative power. It is precisely in such a man that the conception of the eternal, once awakened, will be least likely ever to become extinguished. He may seek to escape from it; he may cling with all his powers to the world, to temporal things; he may do his best to concentrate himself within his own individuality; an irresistible force will still draw him back to the fountain of his being, and thus will he become at variance with himself, or, as is usually termed, a divided mind. Our age is a period especially distinguished by these divided minds. Let us call up before us for a moment the greatest among them, the type of all those who really are, or who affect to be, at variance with God and themselves,—the world-renowned poet-lord. It cannot be

denied: a spirit of opposition, of doubt, and misanthropy, a cold breath of hopelessness and of annihilation, pervades all his writings; terror is his domain; he gloats on the misery, the desolation of the human race;—of hope, humility, submission, the fundamental elements of piety, he knows little. But neither can we deny that his spirit is engaged in a struggle, an often painful and even convulsive struggle, after the Highest, for which it yearns with a longing desire never wholly appeased; human life satisfies him so little, precisely because it seems to him so empty and forlorn, because it does not appear to him to contain the Eternal: precisely because he would fain love mankind quite differently, he feels himself driven into hate. Yet when, at certain moments, the innate perception of the Holy and Divine, the inextinguishable feeling for moral greatness and elevation, the eternal voice of conscience, awake in his soul, with what freshness and energy do they burst forth, and what an empire does he exercise over us! His very rebellion against a superior sustaining power witnesses to the existence and influence of such a power, from whom even so powerful a genius, let him strive as he will, cannot escape. Who now would break the judicial rod over the head of such a man, and anticipate the judgment which the All-Wise has reserved to himself? Even Lamartine, in the Ode to Byron which you have so admirably translated, knows not whether to address him as an angel or as a demon; for even the pious French poet beholds in Byron only an erring and obscured ray of heavenly light; and even *he* hopes that one day this lofty soul, learning to know itself, and remembering its original, may return to peace, to faith, and to love. However this may be, it always seems to me that a more liberal, noble, and pious disposition is indicated by thankfully appropriating whatever such spirits offer us of greatness and beauty, carefully separating what is impure or unholy; and referring the *individual* to Him whose view comprehends all spirits and their courses, and to whom every one,

even the highest, standeth or falleth. Here, certainly, the purely personal veneration for genius must find its limits; for when we have ground for doubting whether a heavenly or a demoniac intelligence stands before us, when the lofty harmony is interrupted by such harsh discords, no worship implying personal submission can be required from us.

But in men of genius there is, however, a *something*, which we can in some measure distinguish from their personality; they represent to us divinely-appointed powers of the universe, whose office it is to work more mightily the great machinery, and to give new impulses to life; they are the "workmen for building up eternal things," few of whom abstain from contributing hay and stubble, but each of whom also inserts a stone which retains a place in the infinite temple; they belong to the powers described by the poet:

> "Time's rushing loom they are seated before,
> To weave the Divinity's life-breathing robe."

The impulse which proceeds from genius may be given with no such intention; but as many inventions, which are originally designed only for the service and comfort of bodily life, are at last pressed in some way into the service of the spirit, and find their place in the promotion of God's kingdom upon earth; so, if a God guides man's history—and we cannot believe, either that it is not guided at all, or that, as has been lately said in jest, it is directed by the Devil—must the impulse given by genius finally operate in such a way as to promote good, and glorify God. In this sense it may, for instance, be good that the spiritual distraction of the age should find its poetical representative, and lurking scepticism its scientific advocate; for only thus can both be fully investigated, and the foundation laid, though at the risk of temporary and partial mischief, for an efficient and conclusive refutation. So far, therefore, as such ends are attained, we may view these great powers, even when we cannot approve

their immediate operation, with the sympathising, wondering admiration with which a thunder-storm inspires us; because they are of divine origin, and lead to divinely ordained results; and thus, rightly understood, fulfil a divine mission and serve a divine law, even though unconsciously, or perhaps unwillingly.

But here also is it that the worship of genius, when of a rational and moral character, passes necessarily, as insufficient in itself, into something higher; and thus vindicates its own truth, by dissolving into this better, absolute truth. If it attempts to set itself up as the highest, universal standard; if it pretends to the power of healing, unassisted, the deepest wounds of our age, it is always in some measure unsatisfactory; partly from the difficulty of defining its object, because it must always remain doubtful *what* men of genius are objects for veneration, and *what* in them really deserves it, partly from the impossibility of fully carrying out the principle; for as soon as we contemplate genius in the deeper sense, in which alone it can claim universal reverence, as a divine manifestation and appointment, the worship of genius inevitably carries us on, beyond itself, to adoration of God. But when acknowledging its own subordinance, as but the introduction to something better, it has its own value, as something infinitely higher than senseless apathy, more noble than heartless ingratitude, and more liberal than that narrow religious and doctrinal bigotry, which, measuring all things by one standard, would have all things in the world uniform, and all in art *directly* moral and edifying; whereas genius, by its elevating and liberating influence, can and will prepare the mind for these higher workings of the Divine Spirit, which alone can give complete freedom.

This, dear friend, is what I designed to remark on the one side, and I shall rejoice if what I have said corresponds in some measure to your views. But it is now time to turn to the other side, and contemplate steadily the falsity of the new

worship. This becomes perceptible as soon as the worship of genius proposes itself as a substitute for religion—the *Christian* religion; and for three reasons: because homage is not religion, because genius is not God, and because Christ is not merely a man of the highest genius. Here the worship of genius appears inferior and unsatisfactory; for living piety assuredly stands higher than what is here called worship; the adoration of God works more powerfully to free and to purify than the worship of genius; the Christian faith makes Jesus its own, in a fuller, deeper, more consolatory sense, as the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, than that worship which, in fact, only assigns to him the highest rank among men of genius.

What, I say, is here called worship, is yet not *piety*, and is incapable of supplying the latter's place, supposing it to be really wholly destroyed. Is it without reason that the name of *worship*, not of *religion*, was given to it by the acute man, who, if not the first to bring forward the worship of genius (for demonstrations of such a tendency may be traced, as we have before remarked, in the world and in literature, for some time before), has at least spoken out most freely and significantly? Certainly not; and unless I mistake, his reason was, that the phrase "Religion, or Adoration of Genius," would at once have drawn attention to its contradictory and unsatisfactory character. The expression "worship" has somewhat of a double and variable sense. In its primary signification of *service*, *care*, watchful and reverential attendance, it is applied to any human or created object of veneration as well as to the divine object of *adoration*, properly so called. In the latter sense, it denotes reverence, love, the sense of dependence, in their fullest meaning, manifested by certain acts, or by the whole life; but in a wider sense it embraces the whole constitution of the religious life in particular; and thus it happens that different religions, that is, different forms of piety, are called different worships. But if we examine the matter more

closely, a very definite distinction exists between religion and worship; their relation, on the one hand, is that of *original* and *derived*, *cause* and *effect*; and on the other, that of *internal* and *external*, *soul* and *body*. Exactly as *ideas* create for themselves *expression*, and the soul moulds to its use the body, yet this expression, this body, have neither life nor significance save through the higher principle dwelling in them;—so a vigorous and decided piety will and must create for itself a form; and this form has its life and significance only through the spirit poured out therein. When the relation is a proper and healthy one, the spirit of piety will bring forth a body (or worship) wholly corresponding to its own significance; while the worship will be wholly pervaded by the spirit, as by an animating soul; soul and body will appear indissolubly blended. Such a worship is but an embodiment of devotion, and devotion is the spiritual truth of the worship. But this ideal state is rather one to be aimed at, than one which is ever likely to be realized. Many instances occur in history, where the spirit of piety has not been strong enough to create for itself a worship; or, possessing this strength, has, like Christianity, long contented itself with the consciousness of its inward riches, without giving a thought to formal institutions; or again, where the body has outgrown the soul, or remained an empty vessel, whence the spirit had evaporated. In the former case, the *inward* will be found to predominate in religion; in the latter, the *outward;* in the one, the principal stress will be laid on conviction, faith, morality; in the other, on external services and the due observance of forms. If, taking this principle as our guide, we would draw a broad line of distinction between the various manifestations of the religious life, there can be no doubt, that in Paganism the *outward*, in Christianity the *inward*, predominates; while the latter religion may be again subdivided into Catholicism and Protestantism, as types of the two extremes. On this account we may with especial propriety designate the heathen religions

as *worships*, while the Christian is essentially *faith* and *spirit;* Catholicism claims especially to be a richly developed worship, while doctrine, conviction, reason, are the strongholds of Protestantism. This distinction by no means implies that Protestantism has not its external forms, or Catholism its internal significance; that there are not deeply pious Catholics, as well as merely ceremonial Protestants; we speak only of the most prevalent characteristics of the two confessions. Thus the word *worship* neither expresses the highest tribute which can be paid to an object of reverence, nor is it the original, fundamental principle of religion; neither does it so include all the essentials of religion, as to warrant us in considering the two ideas identical. Much more strongly are the spirit's highest aspirations expressed in the word (restricted wholly to religious uses) *adoration;* for worship may be paid to those who are only comparatively superior; adoration to the absolutely perfect and highest alone. Thus the Catholic church wisely distinguishes between the adoration which belongs only to God, and the services which may be rendered to the saints. Even using both in a religious sense, adoration, properly so called, is the higher, more comprehensive, more original; for though *worship* and *adoration* properly go together, the former is always derived from the latter, as the true, living expression of which it is alone valuable; and the *moral* principle of religion, which predominates in *adoration*, may be separated from worship. If we apply this to the point in question, we perceive plainly in the use of the word "worship" something enervating and delusive; since the fundamental principles of religion are not definitely expressed therein, but silently abandoned. The idea of *veneration* is substituted for that of *adoration*, for in the worship of genius *adoration* cannot be applied, as this would at once pass into idolatry; that, therefore, which makes *worship* what it is, which alone gives to it a religious significance, is dropped. Neither is the moral element, which forms an essential part

of religion, clearly expressed in the word worship; for all the grave severe notions called duty, conscience, sin, guilt, punishment, and grace, are in no way requisites of *worship*, especially the worship of genius; this is an excitement and an expression of feeling belonging properly to the sphere of sense; and although it exercises a vivifying and elevating influence upon the spirit, the internal disposition and constitution of mind remains in many cases what it was before.

Now, then, the question arises, whether our spirit can perfectly and permanently content itself with such a shadowy semblance of religion, in which the main element, adoration, is wanting. To what are we urged by that impulse which impels man to piety, to religion? Is it not, to draw near to something high, venerable, spiritually-imposing?—and by gazing on this object, to elevate ourselves? Is it not, as Göthe, in one of the most beautiful of his latter poems, expresses it, "to give ourselves up voluntarily, for gratitude's sake, to a higher, purer Unknown"? Well, this also is religion, but not *that religion* which answers to the highest sense of the idea; this does not remain satisfied with the comparatives *higher* and *purer*, nor even with the superlatives highest and purest, but passes at once over all degrees, to the *absolute*. Our nature, which feels itself, notwithstanding its inborn strength, a conditional existence, which gave to itself neither life nor the laws of that life, but has received both, longs not only for something higher, but for the unconditional, the primal fount of life and being; our spirit, which, notwithstanding its own imperfection and that of all which surrounds it, bears within the idea and the inextinguishable desire of perfection, requires not merely something *more* perfect and *more* pure, but finds its entire satisfaction only in the *absolutely* perfect and pure, the Holy One, the essential Ideal of truth, love, and beauty. For a time, the human mind may be detained on the lower stages, and content itself, as in the various forms of paganism, by venting its religious im-

pulses upon the *conditionally* sublime and beautiful in nature, or the *relatively* perfect in humanity; and at this stage religion becomes peculiarly *worship*, nature and hero worship; but though such a state of things may endure for thousands of years, the time arrives at length, and is usually heralded by prophetic spirits, when the might of religious yearning breaks through to the knowledge of the Highest, the incomparably Perfect; or, to speak more correctly, when the Divine manifests itself to mankind in fuller reality. And when the Divine Nature has taken its place as the absolute perfection in man's mind, he contents himself no longer with mere *veneration*, but, overpowered by the infinite sublimity and blessed majesty of God, bows before him in the dust, and *adores* him. This adoration, as soon as it becomes general, certainly takes also a definite form, and shows itself as *worship*. But adoration always remains the root, the vital principle, and maintains its superiority, as something far higher and deeper, over what we call veneration. When once this point is attained, the mind can no more descend to the lower stage of worship without adoration; or should it do so, the step would be backwards, not in advance; no sign of strength, but of exhaustion. If, therefore, as is plain, *adoration* is inapplicable to genius, and if the expression, *worship*, can stand in this connexion, only for veneration without *adoration*, then the worship of genius is obviously a lower stage of the religious life than that on which we have hitherto stood; nay, when the higher has once been attained, the lower can no longer be named *religion* at all. It must, inasmuch as it is an apotheosis of what is highest in humanity, a spiritual hero worship, be considered rather a revived paganism; this is openly avowed even by its champion; but while the ancient idolatries, being natural and unconscious, had a certain character of innocence, the same excuse cannot be alleged for the modern one, though comparatively more elevated and spiritual; since this sets up itself in opposition to a *known*

higher object, and strives to re-embody a long-surpassed phase of the religious life.

If, in this light, *worship* is incapable of supplying the place of *adoration*, still less can genius fill the place of God. Truly, "genius" is a great word; it denotes the highest, the original, the creative principle of the human mind; that active power, governed by fixed laws, yet breaking forth irresistibly in one particular direction, by means of which it can call up forms and images wholly new; and whose creations, presenting truth, goodness, or beauty, in a perfection never before witnessed, seize irresistibly on the mind. But however sublime may be the idea which the word "genius" awakes in our mind, something infinitely greater arises before us at the short and simple word "God;" and though centuries have pondered upon the idea denoted by those few letters, we cannot believe that it is yet exhausted, or has lost its power over the mind; we cannot believe, what some imagine, that this idea need ever be dispossessed of its supremacy, and another substituted in its place, if the human mind would rise to the highest and truest object of reverence. The word "God" still is, and must remain, the highest problem for the thinker, the watchword of hope to the pious, the thunderbolt for the sinner; an influence which the name of genius will never attain. Shall we, however, dear friend, examine more closely what relation these two ideas, "genius" and "God," bear to each other, as objects of veneration? It cannot have escaped your notice, that, as in the word "worship," so also in the expression "genius," when the two are united in the phrase "worship of genius," lies something indefinite and two-sided. This genius, which they bid us revere, are we to understand by it that good spirit by which man, as a race or as an individual, is never wholly forsaken; which, like a guardian angel within, preserves from destruction and encourages in goodness (in which sense we speak of the genius of the human race, of a nation, or of an individual)—or

the powers of genius with which mankind is endowed, idealized as a whole;—or the individual possessors of such powers? And if the latter, in what department of talent must we seek the objects of our worship? Among artists and men of science?—among legislators and founders of empires?—among religious reformers? or are we to embrace, in our veneration, every department, including even the abstract sciences—mechanics and military tactics? What is it that we are to reverence in men of genius; their high endowments, their personal qualities, or their performances? or all these combined? And where is the intellectual line which divides genius from talent;—where the moral boundary which separates genius, worthy of veneration, from that which is unworthy? The article on "The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity," shows plainly that it is not genius in an abstract sense, but collectively, that is, as manifested in all individuals of genius, to which our veneration is to be addressed; and in these, again, less the gift of genius than its exercise, in freeing mankind from some oppressive mental burden, or promoting, by some favourable impulse, their higher development. Still the question remains very difficult; and at all events, a worship, the very conception of which is so perplexing; of which the object is so indefinite; which requires so many limitations, and is of so artificial a character, scarcely appears fitted to exercise a religious influence. But, in order to define the relation of genius, in this sense, to the former object of adoration, the great question is, whether the worship of genius is meant *theistically* or *pantheistically*. If theistically—that is, if it acknowledges, as the creative source of these highly-gifted spirits, whom we call men of genius, a personal, conscious, Original Mind—then, to be consistent, it must resolve itself into adoration of this God. If employed, on the contrary, in a pantheistic sense—that is, if it refers the origin of individual manifestations of genius, only to what it calls the Absolute or Universal Spirit, which, in itself neither personal nor conscious, can become so only when embodied in

certain human beings; the very idea of whose existence and operations involves such a human manifestation;—then arises the more difficult question, how far such views are warranted by truth, and whether, on such a basis, *religion*, in the full sense of the word, is possible? In my opinion, however, the worship of genius can bear none other than a pantheistic sense; for, unless the idea of a supreme, personal God be abandoned, what need can there be for seeking the divine essence only *in* the world, and chiefly in the brightest points of the intellectual world? Nor must we be deemed captious in thus applying the term pantheism, since the champion of genius-worship, in the preface to "Two Friendly Letters," most plainly and distinctly excludes the idea of God, otherwise than as an all-pervading spirit. But if this divine essence or absolute spirit exists only as manifested in the world, then God must indeed be every where and in all parts of the world, but more especially in what is most spiritual: men of genius must thus be the lucent points of that divine glory which pervades all things. If pantheism would be pious, and its piety not wholly vague and objectless,—or a worship of the *universe*, which is, in their interpretation, identical with that of God,—nothing remains, after the annihilation of natural religion, but the worship of the Intellectual, of Genius. Here, then, we have the natural result of pantheism; and may thank those who, following it out to its ultimate consequence, have made the thing so obvious, and warranted us in giving to it its true designation. Am I now, my friend, to enter with you upon the great area of contention for the present age,—the distinctions between theistic and pantheistic views? This would not be possible within the limits of the present communication. I know, also, that you share my conviction, that pantheism, though a good corrective for the cold, lifeless form which theism has, at certain periods, assumed, solves the problem of existence no better, and satisfies the religious feeling far less, than a theism like that of Christianity, which recognizes at once the indivi-

dual personality of the Deity and His all-pervading presence. But there is one side of the question to which I must now direct your attention. You yourself say, in your speech, "Nothing calls us more powerfully to adore the living God, than the appearance and embodiment of genius upon the earth. Whatever, in the ordinary course of things, we may choose to attribute to the mechanical process of cause and effect, the *highest* manifestations of intellect can be called forth only by the express will of the Original Mind, independent of secondary causes;—genius descends among us as from the clouds, precisely when we least look for it. *Events* may be calculated, predicted,—*spirits* never; no earthly oracle announces the appearance of genius; the unfathomable will of the Creator suddenly calls to it—'*Be*'!" This always seems to me to involve one of the strongest proofs of a God,—all-present, indeed, but *personal* and conscious. But I would give another application to the thoughts which you have here expressed. I mean not to appeal to the witness borne by men of genius themselves, the greatest and most influential of whom have ever acknowledged and adored such a God;—no, the very existence of genius is the best proof on that point. Genius is what it is, entirely through that mysterious *something* which is called *personality*; it is no vague abstraction, power, or spirit, but a living individual quality, operating from a definite centre; conscious, free, and capable of self-regulation; exercising a stimulating, inspiring, governing influence over less powerful and original natures. Therefore, when we would do homage to a man possessing this gift, the only appropriate testimonial is the erection of a statue, which shall bring back to us, as far as possible, his bodily presence; whereas a foundation in his honour, such as would be very suitable in the case of a man of quiet usefulness, would be here wholly unsatisfactory. Yet this mysterious, fascinating attribute of genius—this *personal* influence, is not self-created or appointed, but derived mediately or immediately from some

higher source. Can we then believe this originating, superior cause—whether we choose to call it *law*, *power*, or *spirit*—to be *itself* without personality? If without personality, then can it not be *superior;* for it is impossible for our reason to connect the idea of perfection with any *impersonal* existence: we rather require, to embody that idea, the fullest, completest, most conscious individuality. And where, again, are we to seek the cause of personality? In an impersonal, universal essence? or in some unknown transition state, where, we know not how or why, the universal passes into the individual, and the *absolute essence*, by some chemical process, condenses into atoms, which play awhile in the sunshine of life, to melt once more into the Universal? No; as surely as individual spirits exist, and those especially which are gifted with genius derive from this individuality their highest influence, so surely must there be an *individual* Originating Spirit. Without a personal God, genius remains an inexplicable riddle. But another still more striking point claims our attention. You say with justice, "Events may be calculated, spirits never; no oracle of this world can predict their appearance." Certainly, human wisdom must here be silent. Yet even for *spirits* some periodical law must exist;—these mighty minds doubtless form a part in the stupendous calculations by which the universe is governed; were they wanting, the whole plan would be deranged. We can even trace, in the periodical appearance of men of genius—in the variety of their endowments, by which they counterpoise and compensate each other, a pervading, wondrous *law*, a deep-thoughted *order*. In this law, more sublime, as it seems to me, than those merely physical laws of motion, by whose gigantic mechanism the course of the stars is regulated, we discover the deepest, fullest, most conscious *design*; a *design*, whose vastness is equalled only by the *power* which has called this law into operation. Can we now rationally suppose that such an *order* is self-appointed, —such a law self-given? or are we not inevitably directed to

a Ruler and Lawgiver, who has summoned Genius into being, no less than the star of morning—who has measured to both their course,—to the one, its fixed, immutable path; to the other, its free, voluntary agency? This infinite design is, then, assuredly in the world, the vital principle of its two elements, matter and spirit; and no man of faith and reflection will imagine a God, who, dwelling *beyond* his own world, impels it only from without; and from time to time interposes to aid or repair the halting machinery. But to recognize the presence of God *in* the world, and to conceive of him as existing *only* in the world, are two different things; doubtless He, like his emanation, genius—while living in, and pervading his works—has still a distinct, independent existence. Shall the artist of the universe be less individual and self-sufficing than the earthly craftsman; and while the one retains, in his own person, a superabounding fund of life and power, soul and imagination, beyond what is embodied in his works, shall the other be wholly absorbed in His creation? Shall He not, though breathing the fulness of His love and his spirit into the world, yet say, "I am that I am?"

If we have once risen thus, led by the very hand of genius, to the conception of the living God, we shall never again descend from adoration of Him to the worship of genius. Genius can give us nothing but as the medium of God's goodness;—God gives us much which genius is powerless to bestow. We call genius divine, and ascribe to it creative power. Well, it certainly so re-combines the materials within its reach as to approach, in some degree, to this divine faculty; but if we speak of creative power, properly so called, that of genius, as of every human being, stumbles at a blade of grass, a grain of sand; while the true Creator scatters forth worlds like seed, and knows not fatigue. That which we call *divine* in genius is but a richer share of those gifts in which every mortal partakes;—a few rays from the divine essence. Piety, then, when fully developed, will always aspire

to this object of entire and undivided veneration; here only she finds that satisfaction which genius fails to supply—an all-embracing, unwavering omnipotence, governing the universe—an unassailable holiness, the type and model of the universe—an infinite all-wise love, to whom she may abandon herself with unquestioning submission. Only towards God can the feeling of human dependence assume such a character as shall elevate him who feels it, and become his surest support in all the sufferings and struggles of life. Were religion only an exquisite intellectual diversion, a poetry of life, then might we devote our allegiance to genius; but *her* influence is shed over the deepest, bitterest realities, over the dry prose of life; she comes to the weary and heavy laden. When man beholds all mortal pleasures vanish,—when his best hopes prove delusive, and every foundation gives way beneath his feet,—when he is oppressed by the sense of his own crimes, offences, shortcomings,—when he kneels by the dying bed of those who are dearest,—when his own last hour draws nigh,—then will it avail little to look up to genius;—then the smitten, breaking heart needs a different comforter,—then there is no help but in that name which has ever been the refuge of all the pious—which has been *meant* even by those who had never learnt to pronounce it;—the name of the living God—the assurance of His holy presence, His all-helping love. And this faith operates not alone to soothe and satisfy; it exercises also a moral influence, wholly different from that of genius. Genius speaks to our intellect—God to our conscience;—genius elevates—God humbles, chastises, sanctifies us; He reconciles us with ourselves and with Himself,—He grants us, by communion with Him, forgiveness of sin—faith in the benevolence of His purposes—willingness to submit to and co-operate with them. No worldly, mortal relation, though of the highest and most intellectual character, has the moral power of true piety; which yet is not *mere* morality; but, though an essentially distinct principle, is indissolubly connected with it. In

one word, genius cannot supply the place of God; its most sublime office is to reveal to us the truly divine—to raise us to the Primal Mind. And this is the real meaning of the gifted man, whom I have instanced above as a precursor of the worship of genius—our Jean Paul. For when he says, "Intellectual greatness should remind us of the Greatest; and admiration, of prayer," he obviously has no thought of substituting genius for God; but only the hope, that individual genius, or any monument which recals to memory the greatest of our race, would remind man of God's glory, and awaken or quicken the adoration of Him.

May I venture, my friend, to detain you yet a moment, to make a farther observation on what has been already said? That is, if worship cannot supply the place of adoration, or genius, of God, the same proposition holds true of the two taken together; genius is not capable of acting as a substitute for the adoration of God, for true religion. Living piety is a spirit of entire, unconditional devotion; an unquestioning submission to the divine will, seeking safety and happiness, with boundless confidence, in God's love alone. This sublime feeling can never belong to the worship of genius; for towards genius, even of the highest order, we always retain the consciousness of having to do with fellow-men, imperfect and sinful like ourselves; our veneration must always remain of a qualified, conditional, limited nature; the full resignation of faith can have no place there. The one is formed by man; by the other, man is formed. The one, as the product of human intellect, is subservient to that intellect: the other, being of divine origin, claims absolute superiority. Nor does the influence of true religion excel every other in intensity only, but in extent; it not only commands, at one moment, the whole spiritual being, but retains its power through the whole course of existence, over every moment of the spiritual life. It appeals to the thinking faculty of man, no less than to his heart and his conscience; theory, æsthetics,

ethics, are therein indissolubly united. This is not the case with the worship of genius; æsthetic in its origin, theoretical in its development, it wants the full *ethic* power; and though it may occasionally exercise a moral influence, its operations are too secondary and too feeble to be compared with the mighty workings of religious faith. Religion, when of a sound and healthy character, is applicable to every condition and circumstance of life. She is, when allowed her full rights, the heart, the regular pulse of the whole being. Nothing is too mean for her to sanctify and illumine; nothing too encroaching and absorbing for her to reduce within fitting bounds. Not alone in moments of spiritual excitement and elevation, but also in those of depression and deepest sorrow, the thought of God can soothe, reconcile, and bless. The worship of genius has not this all-sufficing power; the poetic excitement can endure only in moments of exaltation; when these are over, the poetry gives place to a dull prose, to a vacancy uncheered by the consciousness of God's presence. Religion is simple, wholesome food—the bread of spiritual life, always nourishing and palatable; the worship of genius is a stimulating, highly-seasoned dainty, agreeable at times, but incapable, when the soul longs for the highest good, of affording permanent sustenance. The same holds good of communities, no less than of individuals. Religion, even in its lowest stages, has a tendency to bind men together, to unite them into brotherhoods; and, in its absolute consummation, must be all embracing, satisfying the human mind in every state of progress. Uniting the Deity with humanity, earth with heaven, it is also a fraternal tie between the highest and the lowest, the weakest and most gifted of mankind; even those of different degrees of religious advancement stand, as it were, on an equality in their infinite distance from the Deity. But this worship of genius, for whom is it? Its advocate himself says, "For the *cultivated* of our age." It is the religion of the cultivated. The uncultivated are thus at once excluded; and,

indeed, those who can scarcely read, who know little of the deeds of great men, would voluntarily withdraw from it. But who are the cultivated? Those who, because they can read, hold themselves as such? Among these, again, we find numbers who are incapable of appreciating genius, who cannot enter into that enthusiasm which its worship requires. These, then, again, must be excluded. And lastly, for men of genius what religion remains? We other mortals, not possessing genius, yet cultivated and susceptible, revere genius; but *men of genius?*—shall they revere themselves, or have they no religion at all? Thus religion, which should be the bond of union between all, would become, as the worship of genius, the cause of the greatest dissension; withdrawing from the heights and the obscure vallies of humanity, it would entrench itself on a middle ground, difficult to be defined; the few possessors of genius would stand *above* religion, the vast body of the uncultivated and apathetic *below;* the former would perhaps vibrate between the worship of themselves—of the so-called God within their breast—and that of genius in the aggregate; the latter, knowing nothing of genius, and incapable of revering it, would be deprived of the bread of spiritual life, at the same time that they are perhaps scantily supplied with bodily nourishment. This, my friend, is a state of things which we can none of us desire; an aristocracy of the worst kind, which, though proposed as a remedy for the decay of religion among the cultivated, would lead to their ruin, as well as to that of the uncultivated.

I might here well stop to enquire the precise manner in which the worship of genius is to be practised, for its advocate has contented himself with suggesting the idea in the most general terms. We are, therefore, left free to suppose it either a solitary inward worship, in the enjoyment of works of art, in the recollection of great deeds and great men, or a social homage rendered to exhibitions and monuments of art, or perhaps offered in a pantheon of great men. But I will

not dwell on this point, for in whatever light we consider the subject, it is always more or less unsatisfactory.

But I have still, my dear friend, one word to say upon the last, and here, perhaps, most important point,—on the proposition—Jesus is not merely a man of the highest genius. Christianity comprehends him more correctly and reveres him more suitably as the world-redeeming Son of God, than that worship which in fact places him only at the head of men of genius. Let us first consider in what sense this worship is to be applied to Christ. The intention of its supporters appears to me this. While Christ is ranked among men of genius, on account of the strength and harmony of his intellectual powers, and the mirror-like clearness of his soul; on account of his devoted, indefatigable labours for a great idea, the unequalled spiritual influence which he exercised, and the incomprehensible works which he performed; they do not design to deprive him of his attributes as Son of God and as Redeemer, but only to give to these a more extended signification. All sublimely inspired men are sons of God; David and Solomon, nay, even Homer and Phidias, may be so called; and with these Christ, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, need not hesitate to share his dignity. All are redeemers who succeed in that at which preceding generations have laboured in vain, who deliver humanity from a want, a difficulty; in this sense Socrates, Phidias, Alexander, and Copernicus have earned the title; but they still reserve, it is said, a peculiar place of honour for Christ. It must not be forgotten that there are many *degrees* of veneration; the labourer is estimated by the extent, difficulty, and value of his labour. Inventors rank higher than reformers; creative minds in art and science stand above the authors of inventions applicable to material life; those who promote the mind's development in some of its powers are inferior to those who aid in unfolding all its capabilities, by placing *life* in its true relation to the Deity. Thus, founders

of religions stand foremost in the band of gifted minds; and Christianity being acknowledged as the most perfect religion, to *its* founder belong the first-fruits of that veneration which we offer to genius. Christ would thus be the first—but how?—among those of similar pretensions?—classed with men on whom rests so many a guilty stain? Here another distinction is made by Schleiermacher between those men of genius who are impelled to realise their conceptions *externally*, in art and science, in deeds of war or peace; and those who, dwelling within themselves, labour to perfect their own nature, as a moral, spiritual, work of art. The latter are not only more harmoniously endowed and developed, purer and more worthy of love; they are also of a higher order, for *man* is for human beings the greatest work of art. A genius of this class was Socrates, who, without attaining artistic perfection in any *one* department of intellect, was greater, as the artist of life, than any whose external productions are the admiration of the world. As natures of this kind are usually conspicuous for piety, the heroes of piety, the founders of religions, belong especially to this class. In the fullest and highest sense is this the case with Christ. How great soever he might be in single outward acts, his greatness depended, not on these, but on the intimate union of his mind with God, through which he could say, "The Son does nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do;" "I and the Father are one;" "No one knows the Father, but the Son;" and, "No one cometh to the Father, but through the Son." In this inner life of love he found full satisfaction; his only external impulse was its natural prompting, and this was to reproduce his own inner life in the life of man. Thus Christ not only stands higher in degree, but he belongs to a different class from those men of genius whom history celebrates in the departments of art and science, church and state. But, while he is the highest example which we know of the inner life, does not the possibility yet remain of his being hereafter surpassed?

Here our attention is called to an especial peculiarity possessed by *religion*. Certainly we often observe, in other domains of human excellence, that one is surpassed by another, only equally gifted, who succeeds him, because the latter occupies vantage-ground, from the progress of human development; and in art and science it is impossible to define the highest attainable perfection. In religion, however, a point may be fixed, beyond which farther progress is impossible; and this is, "that perfect union of the human with the divine character, through which the former, in all its emotions, responds to the latter, and knows and acknowledges this unison as the truest fulfilment of its own destiny." If Jesus lived in this perfect union with the Deity, and exemplified it in every word and deed of life, then by him was attained that highest point of *religious* progress which the future, however it may advance in other departments, can never surpass. But may not some successor attain the same, and thus place himself, as an individual, on a level with Christ? But here, without urging the objection that the *second* who attains such a height must necessarily receive some aid from his predecessor, it is to be considered, that the *first* who experiences this intimate union of man with the Deity, must possess it in greater intensity than any successor; thus in Christ it was an all-pervading, all-absorbing influence, before which every earthly shadow vanished. Therefore, mankind could no more be what they are without Christ, than without religion; for to conceive of religion without Christ, would be the same as to conceive of poetry without reference to the greatest poets. And this Christ is not a mythic, but a historic personage;—no symbol, but an individual;—his history, however, being valuable only as embodying, through the medium of his life, teachings, and sufferings, that principle in which consisted his religious perfection, and the unrivalled superiority of the Christian religion.

This, my friend, is the sense in which the worship of genius

is applied, by its advocates, to Christ. Unquestionably it not only displays much acuteness and refinement, but assigns to Christ no unworthy station, as compared with that which other systems have allotted to him; since it places him at the summit of human nature, and refers to him all possibility of religious progress in the world. It does much, by withdrawing religious veneration from the cold abstractions of ordinary rationalism, and bringing it back to reality, life, and history; it acknowledges God, not merely as a hidden *something* beyond our sphere, but as manifested in his attributes, through a human medium, in which they are willing to admire and glorify his perfections; it does not deny that Christ is the highest individual manifestation of this impersonal Divine essence; insisting, with justice, that the greatest marvel respecting Christ consisted, not in this or that action, but in the individual perfection of his moral and religious character; that the office of Christianity, therefore, is not merely to propagate his doctrines, but, in a deeper and more comprehensive sense, to diffuse his spirit, to make his life the life of man. It thus grasps his character more fully than is done by that historical pragmatism, which would reduce his life and actions to a system of maxims and doctrine, without allowing for those innumerable and involuntary outpourings of inward riches which characterize *genius*. Yet this view is not only insufficient, but involves a secret contradiction; since, in truth, we do acknowledge Christ as a *genius*, and, as the highest genius, occupying the highest station; for this very reason we cannot remain here, but if we acknowledge him as the first among men of genius, *must* acknowledge him also as something more.

That this manner of estimating Christ is unsatisfactory, is evident to the sound understanding. As a leading proof that the worship of genius, even where unavowed, is the ruling impulse of the present age, the fact is adduced, that in all countries, and especially Germany, a disposition is shown to

honour great men, sublime spirits, by statues and monuments; and that though much that is ludicrous frequently mingles with this fashion, it has a substantial foundation, and is an important sign of the times. We cannot deny the truth which is contained in this assertion. But just suppose the idea were entertained of paying this honour to Christ, and raising a monument to his memory; would not this, leaving other considerations out of the question, be the most *ludicrous* manifestation of the monumental mania? It would have something of the same character as the well-known inscription, wherewith Voltaire adorned the portal of the church which he had built:—"Erected to God by Voltaire." To *him* whose monument is the regeneration of the human race, no *other* can be erected; and a name, engraved as no other is, not only on the tables of history, but in the hearts of men, would ill bear spelling out on the pedestal of a statue. Alexander Severus might think of building a temple to Christ; he might place Christ's image in his private chapel, beside those of Orpheus, Abraham, and Apollonius of Tyana; but he did this from his heathen preconceptions; and his homage to Christ, approaching more nearly than anything in antiquity to the modern worship of genius, was of a truly pagan character. All Christendom, however, must immediately feel, that if many to whom monuments are raised are too small for such an honour, Christ is incomparably too great. Churches and cathedrals are erected, not with the idea that an honour is thereby rendered to God or to Christ, but to satisfy the religious necessities of man. Here it may be suggested:—all monuments are essentially of a national character, and require national sympathy; but Christ, breaking through the bounds of nationality, belongs to all mankind; and thus the very universality of the interest attached to him excludes the idea of a monument. Good;—this is not unimportant; and here again is a marked distinction between Christ and other men of genius, who all bear, more or less, a national stamp;

for even Socrates, though the best example in the heathen world of universal human sympathy, was yet, at the same time, so far a Greek and an Athenian, that a monument raised to him by his people or his city would have been perfectly consistent. But the ground lies yet deeper. It lies in the feeling, so beautifully expressed in the words which you quoted from Schiller:—"If a man represents to us *holiness*, he must have majesty; and if our knees do not bend, our spirits will fall prostrate before him." To the divine majesty of holiness we erect no memorial; we reserve for it something different—infinitely greater;—the devotion of heart and spirit, *adoration*.

But this is not a matter appealing only to the pious feelings of Christians; it is clear to the *reason*. If Christ was, as has just been acknowledged, the first *genius* in religion, how has he proved this superiority? We have already shown that it was by attaining the highest imaginable stage of religious progress; by realizing, to the fullest conceivable extent, the union of man with the Deity. But this point, in which I most fully agree with the speculative critics, is also the one where we the most decidedly differ. Taking their "perfect union" in the best sense which it will bear, it is still, to my mind, wholly different from what Christianity understands by this expression. Certainly, Christ, as is proved, not only by his words, "I and the Father are one;"—"He who seeth me seeth the Father;"—but by the whole course of his life, was fully conscious of this union; but this consciousness is not to be understood merely as the knowledge of the actual identity of the human and divine nature, but as something personal and individual, something especially belonging to Christ. And the religious views on which this opinion rests, are decidedly *theistic*, and have nothing in common with pantheism, however refined; for the God with whom Christ knew himself to be one is not a divine essence pervading the world, for whose inward vital principle it is but another name, but a personal God, distinct from the world—a Father, who knows,

hears, and loves his children, and reveals himself to them through Christ. But even this is allowed by the critic, in the preface to the "Two Friendly Letters;" he admits that Christianity rests upon the belief in God's personality; he does not dispute, that the intimate union of man with God, as spoken of by Christianity, is meant, not of mankind universally, but of Christ, the embodiment of perfect humanity, to whom alone belongs full participation in the divine nature; also, that the Deity is to be acknowledged, not merely in his all-pervading presence, but in his special interpositions. But he maintains that the idea of his absolute impersonality has, by degrees, taken root, even among the germs of truth contained in Christianity; and, since Spinoza's time, has become the soul of modern life, poetry, and thought; and this idea he would express somewhat as follows:—There is a God, but not one who, existing beyond the world, retains for Himself a portion of that individual existence, the superfluity of which He expends in the world; on the contrary, He is in the world, and there only; His inner being is hidden greatness—His manifestations are the same greatness contemplated from different points; the visible world is glorified, not here and there, but throughout, by the presence of the invisible—the invisible, not partially, but wholly transfused into the visible. Now, though these modern views may seem at variance with the representations of Christianity as to the peculiar, exclusive position occupied by the divine Man; yet, it is maintained, all depends upon the more or less comprehensive view which we take of Christianity; whether we lay most stress on its original form, or on its inward principle. If we define Christianity as that religion which recognizes the union of the finite with the infinite only at stated points, then the modern notion of an absolute union must appear decidedly unchristian; but if we look upon Christianity as best realized, the more *completely* such a union is attained, then the modern ideas may be deemed more Christian even than the original form of Christianity. This,

my friend, is their openly avowed opinion; but much is herein assumed, which I think that neither history nor theology warrant us in granting. In the first place, the assertion is incorrect, that Christianity rests upon the transcendental system. A religion whose deepest meaning is comprised in the declaration, that man is of divine origin; that in God we live, move, and have our being; that of Him, through Him, and to Him, are all things; that the spirit of God is poured out upon all flesh; that God will make His abode with us; that the believer, the congregation, is a temple of God: such a religion cannot possibly regard God as existing entirely *beyond* the world. The fact is, that Christianity insists especially on the all-pervading presence and influence of the Deity; but so qualified, as not to exclude the belief in His transcendental perfections, and independent existence. But the question of most importance here is not precisely that of immanence or transcendence, but that of the personality, self-consciousness, and absolute freewill of God. These attributes are recognized by Christianity; but the speculations in question, notwithstanding the best endeavours of their supporters, are always unsatisfactory on this point. They appeal, on the other hand, to universal consciousness, and comfort themselves with the assertion, that pantheism is the soul of modern life, thought, and poetry. But can this proposition be demonstrated? It may be true of the belief, that God has an animating existence and presence *in* the world, as well as beyond; but is it so of the denial of God's personality, as distinct from his manifestations of his attributes in various individuals? This I cannot believe when I look at a considerable number of the philosophers in all countries—at the great majority of the theologians, and at the great body of the Christian world. Pantheism may have great influence, but cannot yet boast of victory. Yet granting the assumption, may not modern opinion be in error? Have not false notions been held by past times, which *then* were modern? In fact, many strong and incon-

trovertible proofs, not merely of a practical, but also of a theoretical nature, as may be seen by many modern systems besides that of Hegel, may be adduced in support of the belief in a *personal* God, in the Christian sense; and this belief, which has stood the test of centuries, is far from being as yet obsolete. Our hearts still yearn after the great Paternal Heart. Our moral sense feels entire satisfaction, only when assured of its intimate relation to a holy and all-wise Governor of the universe, who is to us a pledge of the final triumph of *good;* our conscience irresistibly reminds us of Him to whose justice we must render account. That dark spot in man's history, the existence of evil and sin; the great questions of the world's origin and history, receive no more satisfactory solution from the pantheistic conception of God as existing in the universe, and identical with the minds of men, than from the belief in him as perfect from the beginning, unchangeable, self-existing; and, on the other hand, this belief affords the only substantial foundation for the peculiar dignity attributed by the Scriptures to Christ. From this foundation it is, in the argument above quoted, forcibly wrenched; but is it allowable, by the rules of fair reasoning, to force a doctrine thus from its original connexion, and then to profess that our own interpretation is the true and satisfactory one? It is maintained, that the union of Christ with God is the fundamental principle of Christianity, and that Christianity is the *absolute religion;* but a meaning is assigned to these words, different from that in which they are employed by Christianity, but which its advocates put forth as more Christian than Christianity itself. And how do they justify this? By the following argument:—"To regard the peculiar relation of the divine Man to the rest of mankind as the special condition of Christianity, amounts to the same thing as maintaining, that freedom indeed existed in the Grecian states, but is extinct among us, because the special condition of freedom is, the exclusive position of a number of free citizens as distin-

guished from slaves." I will oppose example to example. To assume, as the special condition of Christianity, that not Christ, but all mankind, is the divine man; and to uphold the latter as the more Christian doctrine, is the same as saying that a state, whose constitution is essentially monarchical, would be far more so, and more consistent, if all its citizens were kings; or that an army, of which it is a necessary condition that it should have a commander, would be far superior if *all* commanded. And, indeed, the exclusive position of Christ, as distinguished from the rest of mankind, holds good, not only of himself, during the short period of his individual appearance on earth, but of Christianity in its permanent character. If we view it historically, we find but *one* in whom the hopes of the nations have been fulfilled, and the second birth of humanity exemplified; if doctrinally, we can conceive of but *one* Lord and Master; if as a heavenly kingdom, we know of but *one* Founder and royal Head; if as a system of redemption and atonement, we hear of but *one* who has died for all, and accomplished a universal atonement. In short, turn where we will, so long as we enquire respecting Christianity in its essential character, not in the theories which have been grafted upon it,—so long as we appeal to the unanimous feeling of the Christian world,—we find the peculiar position of Christ everywhere acknowledged; and to wrest this from an individual to a universal application, would be taking the circumference for the centre. The theory, and the attacks of its supporters upon the original conception of Christianity, would be more plausible, if *our* assumption were, that the position of Christ was not only peculiar, but *isolated*. But Christianity, while vindicating the exclusive dignity of Christ, teaches also his intimate and indissoluble connexion, in history and character, with the whole human race. His station as the divine Man is important, inasmuch as by his influence the same divine life is reproduced in others; he became a Redeemer, because the world needed and was prepared for

him, and because he awakened in *others* the faculty of redeeming and healing. In both characters, *he* first fully exemplified the capacity of human nature for becoming a vessel of the divine spirit, and assimilating itself to that spirit in all its manifestations. Thus the divine Man, the Redeemer, came, not as something wholly alien and preternatural—not, as the Gnostics dreamed, as a heavenly spirit of wholly different race, into a world naturally hostile to him—but to a race allied to him in proportion as they are allied to God; to a race requiring his presence, and partaking his character in proportion to the influence of his life and spirit upon them.

But there is yet, my friend, another side of the question, which cannot have escaped you. The union of Christ with God, as originally taught by Christianity, is not merely personal and individual, but such as could take place only by the immediate exercise of the divine will. As a necessary consequence of the pantheistic theory, the divine and human nature must be considered identical; the one exists only in the other; the difficulty would be, not in admitting that God once manifested Himself as man, but in supposing this to have only happened once; since in such manifestations, according to their views, He has His only real existence. For the idea of redemption, as an especial, voluntary communication from the Deity, through an appointed individual, to a sinful race, there is here no room; but if the word *redemption* be used, it may, on this system, be applied in two senses: thus, God redeems man by making known to him his identity with the divine nature; but, at the same time, *men* redeem God, since only *in* them can he exercise his attributes, or be conscious of his existence. The view taken by Christianity is of course wholly different: it is by no natural necessity, but by a free act of creative grace, that the fulness of the Godhead has been displayed bodily among men; the union of the divine with the human nature is not one of which the very *consciousness* of its possibility makes us par-

takers, but must be effected by a peculiar process. Christianity, in the very admission that the human nature was originally adapted to this union with the divine, involves the idea of some obstruction, which must have interposed between this original design and its accomplishment; that obstruction, wholly left out of view by pantheism,—*sin*. If, as history proves, this evil influence had obtained complete dominion over man, his immediate union with God becomes out of the question; the power of sin must be first vanquished, annihilated within him. But this, from the very state of subjection in which he is held, cannot be effected by his own effort; but must be the work of that Being alone, whose very nature renders Him unassailable by sin, and supreme over it. The individual, therefore, through whom the Deity opens, as it were afresh, His intercourse with human nature, becomes necessarily the *Redeemer*, not from one special spiritual burden, pressing on one particular period, but from the burden which weighed down the whole human race; the atonement which he effects is that of mankind with their holy Creator; and in this character we again see him invested with a special and unrivalled importance and dignity.

It is in this character that, amongst all minor differences, the faith of all Christendom hangs upon Christ; and there can be no doubt that this interpretation expresses the original intention of Christianity, of Christ himself, far better than the new worship, which assigns to him only the first place among men of genius. But even here this worship seems to me inconsistent with itself. For if we recognize Christ, in the fullest sense, as the highest religious genius, we must surely do so in the sense which he himself claims. Now he claims to be the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world; and as such, to rank above all men of genius. But if the grounds on which he founds this claim—his conception of God's character, and of his own relation to him—are wholly un-

substantial, it is not clear how he can be reckoned among the greatest possessors of genius, far less how he can be placed at their head. How can we receive, as the highest genius in that department of knowledge most important to mankind, one whose own spiritual office, if we would understand it rightly, and accord to it a permanent influence, must be taken in a sense wholly different from his own? But that the Christian idea of Christ is the correct one, is proved (as I have endeavoured, in my answer to Strauss, to show) by the unequalled impression produced by his life and character, both on their immediate witnesses, and on us, through the simple, unstudied gospel narratives; by the influence of his mission, which has extended over the whole history of the Christian church, and is still felt individually by each one of us; by its harmony with the deepest wants of the human heart and spirit; with the idea of perfection which before slumbered in our minds, but which, by Christ's appearance, has been awakened to reality and consciousness.

If what has been said be true,—and that it is so, millions, however differing in expression, will bear witness; if man requires not merely a worship of intellectual excitement and luxury, but an adoration, which humbles, sanctifies, and morally regenerates him; if genius, which—in proportion to its elevation and purity, points to its divine Original—can indeed *bear witness* to the all-mighty, all-holy, all-loving One, but never supply his place;—if Christ, though his endowments may be not unaptly compared with those of genius, stands, in his peculiar personal dignity, higher than all men of genius; —if he alone can give the weary and heavy laden to drink of the waters of life freely, then the last hour has not yet struck, either for what we have hitherto called religion, or for the Christian faith in particular. The external form, the outward observances, may alter; the spirit, the essence must remain. The Ancient of Days will hold his rule;—Christ will not decend from the throne which he occupies as the world-

redeeming Son of God, to take place, as an equal, in the ranks of men of genius; but, though he hold nothing alien to him that belonged to humanity, he will always remain the only one who, himself holy, could feel no shadow interposed between him and the God with whom he was united, and by whom he is, consequently, eternally glorified.

In this confidence let us go to meet futurity;—the signs of the times may be threatening; but whatever be our lot, the best and highest cannot be taken from us. Meanwhile, in all the changes of time, I remain, in true love, thy devoted

ULLMANN.

Heidelberg, July 25th, 1839.

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS.

THE MODERN "WORSHIP OF GENIUS" AND THE ANCIENT GENII-WORSHIP.

All things in which there is any sense, must not only possess a certain degree of internal consistency, but also be connected with other things; only that which is wholly irrational stands entirely remote and isolated. In so far, therefore, as the worship of genius contains a rational meaning and a comparative truth—for if it were, as some say, pure nonsense, there would be little sense in arguing the matter polemically; far less, in a refined and polite style of polemics—in so far, then, as it possesses sense and truth, something similar must have preceded it; but doubtless in a different form, since nothing under the sun returns in the same shape. Accordingly, we find, between the modern worship of genius, and the ancient worship of men of genius, a certain affinity, and at the same time a pervading difference.

The ancient notion on the subject may be thus briefly expressed: the nations of antiquity, especially the Greeks and Romans, amongst other modes by which they, so to speak, realized to themselves the connexion between gods and men, placed between them beings of a middle nature; who, like the angels of monotheism, though superior to men, were inferior to the divinities whose character they in some measure shared. These were supposed to preside, as special friends and guardians, over human life; protecting sometimes individuals, sometimes communities. Thus, they conducted the soul of an individual from a higher sphere to this lower

world, prepared for it its bodily garment, guided it through life, and assisted its transit to another state of being; or they were the originating, animating, protecting powers of entire communities. These genii were also supposed to represent the original type, the purest spiritual existence, of those individuals to whom they belonged; thus even the gods had in this sense their genii. The Genius which the ancient world assigned to any person, was his purified, concentrated individuality; and being considered in itself a person, became thus his protecting, tutelary spirit. The two ideas became blended together. In this sense, according to ancient notions, each man had his Genius,—the divine principle of human nature, in fact, thus idealized,—giving to his life its peculiar stamp, conducting him to the Highest. This Genius was to man something holy, to be honoured with duteous service, or, if displeased, propitiated by every possible atonement. Thus a serious and important religious worship was consecrated by men to their own genii. But if one man was distinguished above others, to him was attributed a higher, mightier Genius; and the feelings of veneration for this favoured individual were expressed by a corresponding veneration for his Genius. Servants, therefore, honoured the genii of their masters; children, those of their parents; nations, those of their benefactors, heroes, and rulers. From this originally pure religious conception sprang the homage paid to the genii of the Roman emperors, by whom it was usual to swear; and, finally, an abject flattery introduced the apotheosis of the emperors themselves, and even of the worst among them. But, as we have already remarked, not only individuals, but communities, had their genii; a family had its *genius domesticus;* cities, nations, empires, had their tutelary spirits. In Rome especially, this worship became naturalized; the Eternal City itself, the army, the senate, paid homage to their genii; and we find it more particularly prevalent in the colonies, where altars were erected, temples

built, and sacrifices offered to these invisible protectors. Even the god had his Genius sculptured beside him on a smaller scale; and the animal, vegetable, and mineral world was animated and governed in like manner. In these genii was embodied that divine principle which pervades both the animated and the inanimate world; while the *heroes* were idealizations of *humanity* striving upwards to godlike perfection.

If we compare these ancient conceptions with the modern notion of the Worship of Genius, we certainly perceive a point of affinity. In both, concentrated, commanding spiritual power is the object of reverence; for according to the ancient idea, a man's Genius necessarily expresses his best and highest qualities, his better self, the spirit in which he acts, the power which he exercises, the form which his life assumes. So far the ancient genii-worship was a worship of human nature; but of human nature in its purity, perfection, and ideality. Here the modern idea coincides with the ancient; but at this very point the difference becomes apparent. To the ancient world, the Genius was indeed the ideal of humanity, whether individually or in the abstract; but at the same time it was to them a something personally divine, a real existence, however closely bound up in some wider or narrower sphere of human life. To moderns, genius is not an independent divine existence, beyond and above man, but it is the divine principle within man; in fact, human nature itself, though viewed on the best side. With this difference of conception, the modes of worship must also be essentially different. Among the ancients, genii-worship was a real religion; the genii had altars, temples, and sacrifices, and in their worship lay something mysterious and awful. A man could prostrate himself in deep earnestness before his own Genius, and still more so before those of superior individuals, or of whole communities. The genii-worship stood not in opposition to that of the gods, but was organically connected

therewith; the one led upwards to the other, and might even, as the gods also had their genii, blend with it. Finally—and this is a principal consideration—it was of popular and universal interest; for its spirit and application might be brought home to the very lowest. But all this is inconceivable with respect to the Worship of Genius, in the modern sense. A veneration for great men, in their merely human character, can never become religion, properly so called; but by merging into idolatry, it stands in direct opposition to the adoration of God, instead of being intimately connected therewith. Its objects being only such conspicuous and superior individuals as are appreciated by none but the more cultivated, its character becomes wholly aristocratic; and by excluding the mass of mankind, the poor in mind and body, it excludes itself from the title of *religion*. But the conclusion to be drawn from the above remarks is this: not, that the ancient genii-worship would be for us a satisfactory embodiment of the religious principle, or that we should aim at reviving it under the form of angel-worship, the idea most nearly corresponding to it in the Christian world; but only, that in this ancient worship, in its connexion with paganism, there was more religion, properly so called, than can or ever will be found in the modern Worship of Genius, as connected with Christianity.

ON THE EXISTENCE OF A LAW FOR THE PERIODICAL APPEARANCE OF MEN OF GENIUS.

Schwab, in his friendly answer to my letter, has thrown some doubts on my assertion, that the appearance of great geniuses are periodical, and governed by a great, comprehensive law. This has led me to reconsider what I before said; but I have as yet found no reason to retract or materially modify my opinion. I venture to say here one word more on the question.

To regard the appearance of men of genius as mere chance, or dependent on material causes alone, will be impossible to any one who views man's history, not as a vast chaos, but as the scheme of an intelligent, superintending Power. There remains, then, only this alternative: to refer the appearance of every single individual to a special act of divine will and creative energy; or to recognize, in the whole succession of such individuals, *one* great act of the same will, expressed in an eternal, inviolable law. Each supposition has much on its side; the former seems, at first, more honourable to God, as well as to men of Genius, who thus appear to derive their being more directly from an act of free will on His part; the other corresponds more to the general course of Providence, and suggests more clearly the idea of a great spiritual choir, extending, in harmonious succession, through the whole history of human progress. If, however, we examine more closely, we shall find that the two sides of the dilemma are not contradictions, but different views of one great truth. Free will and necessity are, when used of God, two ways of expressing the same idea. Looking, according to our imperfect conceptions, at each separate manifestation of the Divine will, we may truly say, that by a special exercise of creative power, the heaven-born gift of genius has been bestowed on the world at such a period, and among such a people. But we must guard well against representing to our minds the Divine will as a series of unconnected resolutions; it is, on the contrary, an all-embracing plan, eternal, unchanging: and thus the idea of a law, by which the periodical appearance of men of genius is regulated and fore-appointed, and the progressive intellectual development of the human race secured, harmonizes fully with what our previous conceptions would lead us to expect.

Again, with reference to revelation, the Christian faith assures us, on the one hand, that the appearance of Christ had been, from eternity, pre-determined by the Divine will; and

on the other, that this determination was carried into effect precisely at the period when all was prepared for the purposes of his mission. This fore-appointment of Christ from all eternity is especially pointed out to us by the apostle Paul (who, in this sense, may be called the founder of religious philosophy); as when, for instance, he says that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world; while the *historical necessity* of his appearance at a particular period is expressed by those assertions of Scripture, that the Son of God and of Man was born in the fulness of time; which mean only, that he appeared at the precise moment when the preparations for his work were completed, and the world in such a state, that the influence of his mission, however temporarily counteracted, would never be wholly lost. But Christ, as both profane and sacred records demonstrate, does not stand isolated in the world's history, but was heralded among the Jews by the law and the prophets,—among heathen nations by myths and symbols—by philosophy and poetry—by the very corruption which awakened anticipations of what was so much needed. If, therefore, Christ's appearance was pre-determined, so must have been all the preparations for his appearance, and, consequently, all individuals who aided in these preparations; and thus men of genius, especially in the departments of religion and morality, necessarily become involved in the one great scheme of the world's history, and subject to the laws by which this is carried on.

Another argument may be drawn from the multiplicity of branches into which the operations of human intellect are divided; none, however, forming an independent whole, but indissolubly connected with others. Thus, if one suffers, all are injured, mediately or immediately. Hence a certain regularity and proportion is necessary in the development of the several branches; and, consequently, in those particular manifestations of genius, *in individuals*, by which this development is carried on. Here, again, the idea of a general law is

necessarily implied. We do not mean that men of genius are planted in dull uniformity, at equal distances, like trees in pleasure-grounds; but, as the all-comprehensive laws of the physical world allow of infinite variety, and endless individual peculiarities, such must even more freely prevail in the spiritual.

Another question, and the one which Schwab seems particularly to have had in view, is, "whether this law can be traced and calculated by experience, like those of the heavenly bodies, whose evolutions may be predicted with mathematical accuracy?" Here, I reply, that such mechanical certainty is impossible in a law of the spiritual world; all spiritual matters being, like God himself, beyond the grasp of sense, and therefore liable to dispute and doubt. Yet it may be proved, though not mathematically,—proved, not only by *a priori* reasonings, but by the universal experience of mankind, which bears witness to the marvellous regularity and impartiality with which the various intellectual endowments have been distributed. Thus, every science and every art—the lowest and the most sublime—the driest as well as the most attractive, has found brains specially organized for its culture, and minds which have recognized therein their fitting mission. No age has been over-burdened with talent, none has been wholly destitute; nor can we point to any period, either totally deficient in mathematical or poetical genius, or possessing such, to the exclusion of all other gifts. We also remark, that among those of more ordinary endowments, men of high creative genius appear from time to time, at appropriate seasons; thus, great occasions have never been wanting in great men; nor have great geniuses ever failed in finding fitting scope for their energies. If such a law be once established, will it not sufficiently demonstrate the existence of an infinitely wise and powerful Lawgiver? And this was the only object which I had in view.

One more objection I must expect to encounter, namely

this: "From the idea of a self-conscious God, you infer the existence of such a law, and then make the law an argument for the idea of a self-conscious God; is not this arguing in a circle, and therefore valueless in the way of proof?" It certainly *is* arguing in a circle; but far from rendering the proof valueless, it is only what in such cases unavoidably takes place. We argue, from the idea of a living God, that He must reveal Himself; and from those revelations of Himself which He has afforded us in history and scripture, we argue that He *is*. Our belief in Christ leads us to God; but without presupposing the existence of God, this belief is impossible. We trace in every occurrence of our lives the hand of Providence; but we need a previous belief in Providence, to enable us to solve life's riddle, and harmonize its dissonances. Thus is it ever in such matters; nor can it, in our present state, be otherwise. God explains to us the world, and the world, God; reason learns from experience, and experience is rendered intelligible by reason.

THE

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER,

OR,

ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER,

OR,

ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

AN ESSAY,

RELATIVE TO MODERN SPECULATIONS AND THE PRESENT STATE OF OPINION.

BY

PROF. C. ULLMANN.

PREFACE.

THE little work which I here offer to the sympathizing public appeared first in the "Theological Studies and Criticisms." Many who read it there earnestly requested me to publish it separately. They thought it might assist in giving clearer ideas on the fundamental character of Christianity, to those persons who are unable personally to investigate every movement in public opinion; and be especially useful to the more cultivated among the laity. I was the less disposed to refuse so kind a request, because I consider it the duty of every student, who is in any way qualified for the office, to contribute to the instruction of others, and especially so in those departments of knowledge which involve the highest interests of the human race. Sympathy for these subjects appeared for some time extinct, or nearly so;—in the present day it has revived with full force. Religion, Christianity, the Church, occupy now the foreground of human interest, and almost throw politics, and the *material* concerns of life, into the shade. None but the most sanguine or inexperienced can hope that this interest lies in general very deep; or avoid observing how much that is incongruous or impure blends with it, giving often to the holiest subjects an air of caricature. But it would be equally unjust to deny that a deep-felt necessity lies at the bottom of this popular excitement,—that the spirit of the age, as manifested in its best and noblest repre-

sentatives, is engaged in a struggle for higher and more satisfactory forms of life and thought. But since this incongruous admixture still remains, it becomes the duty of those who have devoted themselves to the subject, and whose studies perhaps give them a clearer insight into such matters, not to withdraw within themselves, or a limited circle of the studious, but to do their best for the general benefit. I thus send forth these sheets to try if any such power resides *in them*. Some things I have endeavoured to render more generally intelligible; and have added such considerations as I thought might serve the main purpose. But I have avoided too lengthy a development of my views, both from the fear of becoming burdensome, and because I feel convinced that the cultivated reader will understand and apply what I can only briefly indicate.

I conclude with the words of a highly-gifted man, which seem spoken from my own soul: "In this age, which appears to us so much advanced, Christianity is still far from having received the full application of which it is capable to the conscience and life of man,—from having uttered its crowning word, or expressed its whole burden of thought. In *one* sense it has said all from the beginning,—in another, much yet remains for it to say,—and the world will not cease till Christianity has delivered its whole message."

C. Ullmann.

Heidelberg, Easter, 1845.

THE

ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

I.

Former ages *lived in* Christianity,—the present thinks and speculates upon it. The former had an instinctive, almost unerring perception of what is Christian,—the latter strives to analyze and define it; and though clearer ideas are often derived from this process, it is still one in which we have to grope our way, and often, from neglecting that original instinct, wander from the right path.

The essential character of Christianity was, of course, set forth from the beginning in its fundamental instructions, but it was not expressly reduced to its first principles, or compressed into some well-defined form, and thus placed in direct opposition to the *unchristian* element. The "apologists" of the first centuries, while they defend Christianity against its assailants, develope, at the same time, the first germs of Christian theology, and set forth with great clearness its leading doctrines respecting God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, redemption and sanctification; but to comprehend in one view the distinctive peculiarities of Christianity, and to contrast it, as such, with Judaism or Heathenism, does not seem to have occurred to them, however much such a work was needed. From the fourth century forwards, the intellectual activity of

the church was devoted to the definition of various doctrines, each being considered separately and independently; in the speculative East, disputes turned chiefly on the ideas entertained of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and of Christ in his double nature: in the practical West, on the doctrine of sin and grace,—on the necessity and means of salvation; but theologians, wholly absorbed in these details, never thought of comparing Christianity, as such, with other forms of religion; or, if this was ever done, it was only incidentally, as when distinguishing the doctrine of the Trinity from the Jewish and pagan conceptions of the Deity. Least of all was this work to be expected from the middle ages, whose employment was to systematize and refine upon what, by the authority of the church, was stamped for them as absolute truth—as *Christianity;* there was naturally no motive for comparing *this* with other forms, or measuring its intellectual and spiritual capacity with theirs; and had such a desire existed, the want of historic training and unbiassed criticism would have rendered it impossible. Even the Reformers, who caught so large a portion of the Christian spirit, were far from thinking to analyze it; they had yet to free the beating heart of Christianity from the stifling incumbrances of ecclesiastical authority; all their struggles were practical, and confined *within* the sphere of Christianity and the church,—all that lay beyond was for them of little interest. The moderns have been the first to attempt an exact definition of the distinctive character of Christianity. This has been the natural result of their advance in historical and philosophical culture, and especially of their very enlarged study of ecclesiastical history. They have perceived that Christianity, independent, original, and divinely-derived, as it may be allowed to be, stands at the same time in a great historical connexion, the comprehension of which is necessary for its full significance; that it did not precisely fall from heaven in its present state, but has grown up like other institutions; and the desire has

arisen of comprehending it in its relation to other religions—in its historical, human aspect; and of thus more fully appreciating its superiority. For half a century many works have been written with this view on the spirit and essence of Christianity: they display very different tendencies, and reflect the various phases of theology and general culture. Thus, to give only some of the most striking examples, the excellent Storr, in his time, dwelt especially on the *supernatural* and *wonderful* element of Christianity. Herder considers its *universal human sympathy* to be its distinguishing characteristic. Chateaubriand has seized upon its sublime, all-pervading *beauty*, as affording the fittest scope for his genius. Every age, every person of strong individual character has thrown a light on some new aspect of this wonderful Existence. The Christological discussions of the present day especially, have led, amongst other advantageous results, to a clearer discrimination of its specific peculiarities, and have assisted in baring its inmost core to the light of day.

Instead of starting, as was formerly the general case, with wholly one-sided notions,—as partizans of Catholicism or Protestantism, of so-called primitive Christianity or of ecclesiastical authority, of supernaturalism, rationalism, or criticism,—and thus taking a partial development as the universal standard;—dwelling on the divine or the human, the doctrinal, ethical, or æsthetic element, to the exclusion of all others;—men seem now to have attained a wider and more comprehensive view. They begin to regard Christianity as a *whole*, at once historical and ideal, human and divine; capable equally of universal and of individual application; to be studied both in its origin and in its progress. By such a process only can we arrive at the central point of vitality—the *heart*, whose pulsations give life and motion to the whole organization.

It is in this sense that I propose, in the following pages, to

examine the distinctive character of Christianity; that is, to inquire what makes it such as it is, and gives it a peculiar impress, as distinguished from other religions. This may be called the *peculiar*, the *specific*, or the *essential* element of Christianity. A distinction has even been drawn between the first and last of these appellations. The former, it has been said, implies the external, historical, circumstantial peculiarities; the latter, the idea, the inner truth, the Permanent. Thus, the unchangeable essence of Christianity would consist in this alone:—that the person of Christ forms the central point of Christian piety; or, perhaps, that the religious and moral principles which he originated form the basis of man's higher life. But the question of the specific relation of Christ to the religious community of which he is the head;—whether he is to be regarded as its intentional founder, or only as its indirect originator; to be viewed as a teacher, an example, a lawgiver, or as a ruler; a Redeemer, or as an atoning sacrifice,—this is left to the free reason of believers; and may, therefore, be considered as somewhat uncertain and variable. But this distinction is unwarranted. The relation of Christ to his followers must be that which he himself claimed, and which the first propagators of his religion claimed for him; a relation, the exact nature of which may be disputed, but cannot be arbitrarily altered. It is certainly possible to discriminate between the words "peculiar" and "essential;" for example, our *essential* characteristic is, that we are *men;* our peculiarity consists in being this or that *individual man.* Thus it may be said, that Christianity is essentially a *religion;* its *peculiarities* are those points in which it differs from other religions. But in the present case, the two ideas cannot be separated. It cannot be maintained that Christianity is first *religion*, and that then something is added by which it becomes Christianity; but, in the very fact of its being essentially *Religion*, consists that peculiarity which pervades all its

manifestations, and distinguishes them from all other so-called religions. It is this very peculiarity by which it claims to be *the* universal religion, the Religion of Mankind.

II.

We have remarked above, that until recent times, the essence of Christianity has not been the object of formal investigation. This, however, does not exclude the idea of this essence having been manifested, under various forms, at various periods. On the contrary, we remark a regular series of such manifestations, corresponding very characteristically to the great periods of Christian development. The spirit of Christianity, in a cycle of many hundred years, has assumed in reality all those phases through which philosophy has passed in its reasonings on the subject.

Christianity, on its first appearance, was received as a new life, and embraced as something *whole* and undivided. Its founder formed the central point which gave unity to the entire body. A similar influence was exercised by the apostles and their immediate followers; but the original harmony soon suffered from the undue preponderance of one or more elements, to the neglect of others equally important. For a while, however, the primitive spirit of love preserved the essential unity and proportion of the Christian church in the midst of many individual discrepancies; but this unity was that of innocence, not of spiritual ripeness. When Christianity, first embraced as a whole, began to be dissected and analyzed, unity necessarily disappeared, and can only be recovered when, by means of these very struggles, Christianity shall have attained its full maturity and development.

The nature of man, whose highest qualities are at first scarcely discernible germs, is impelled, by its very constitution, to *growth;* and this development most frequently proceeds, not directly, but by what appear irregular and complicated

processes; until, from the midst of struggles and contradictions, the whole truth is evolved. The same applies to Christianity. The abundance of its treasures can be unfolded only by a gradual, historical process. It necessarily follows, from the limited nature of the human mind, that each element must successively become the object of preponderating interest and exertion; and we shall find that each great period of human progress has had some such pervading influence. The process must continue, till all disproportions shall merge into a higher unity.

The first object of interest to Christian antiquity was naturally, Doctrine. This was first studied as a whole, in the defence of Christianity itself; but from the fourth to the sixth century (the essentially dogmatic period of the church), the interest was subdivided among various points of belief. It was necessary for Christianity, in its contest with hostile religions, clearly to understand its own doctrines, and to fix and embody them in distinct words and forms; and the speculative, philosophically-trained Greeks, to whom it was first delivered, were peculiarly qualified for this office. When the ancient world, with its previous culture, sank, and Christianity was transplanted into the fresh soil of the west, it received a new mission: hitherto its energies had been devoted to self-development; now it was called upon to train others, and to become a moral power for the instruction of the rude barbarians. This was undertaken by the *Romish Church*, which inherited from its birth-place the love of power and rule, and the ambition of fusing all nations into one great universal empire; only this empire was now to be spiritual instead of temporal. Under its hands Christianity assumed a new form, suited to its new office; it became an educational institution—a *law;* it unfolded principally its moral, disciplinarian qualities, though disguised under the veil of church authority. But Christianity, as a law, was only preparing to burst forth from its masquerade, and display itself,

living and breathing, in its character of a *Gospel*. For this work, the German race, with their depth of feeling and fulness of inward life—their moral earnestness, intellectual power, and religious fervour—were peculiarly fitted; and thus, when the time was fulfilled, emancipated themselves from the tutelage of the church, and developed among themselves a new, living form of Christianity, which was restored by the Reformation to the highest dignity, as Redemption, Atonement, Justification of the sinner before God. Men now awoke to a comprehension of its character, as the religion of Freedom,—freedom towards God and towards the world.

We have now considered Christianity in its three primal forms: as Doctrine, as Moral Law, and as Redemption. But a fourth view has by degrees assumed an importance which in the beginning could not have been anticipated. It is that which regards, as the essential element of Christianity, *the union of man with God*, and claims for it, as sole dispenser of this privilege, the title of the absolute, essentially perfect Religion. We find traces of this conception in the remote periods of Christian antiquity; it is still more apparent in the mysticism of the middle ages, especially among the Germans; but it has become, for the first time, the *predominating* influence, in the philosophical and theological speculations of modern times. From the beginning, however, it has manifested two very distinct tendencies; one towards pantheism, the other towards Christian theism. The first has spread widely; but though it assumes to be the expression of the "mind of the age," we can accept with confidence such views only as explain Christianity on its own principles, on its own foundation of belief in a personal God.

These various types of Christianity are well expressed in the various churches into which the Christian world is divided. As Doctrine, as a theoretic system of belief, it is embodied in the Greek church,—the church of Christian antiquity,—which very characteristically claims the title of

Orthodox; its employment as a system of morals and discipline is strikingly exemplified in the Romish church,—the church of the middle ages,—whose pretensions, not only to universal sway, but to absolute *personal* influence, are well expressed by the appellation "Catholic." As the religion of redemption and atonement, it predominates in that church which first arose among the Germans, and which has been suitably named "Evangelical,"—the church of modern times; and lastly, that church, which, while comprehending in itself the characteristics of all the preceding, aims at realizing Christianity as *union with God* and universal *brotherhood among men*, as the spirit of Christ, glorifying man's whole existence; this church, for which, as we hope, the religious movements of the present age are preparing the way, we call the church of the future,—the *true catholic church*,—which shall introduce a unity, not external and compulsory, but internal and inherent, which, breathing into ecclesiastical forms the spirit of Christianity, shall create, from these hitherto incongruous elements, a living and harmonious whole.

Now the very series which we thus trace in real life, has been lately repeated in the speculations of modern theology on the essence of Christianity; only compressed into a brief period, and slightly modified by other influences. And here we are first struck with the gradual progress from externals to internals; from the first reception of Christianity as a form of belief, to that stage in which we view in it the glorification of our nature, by assimilation to its Divine Prototype.

But if we regard Christianity as the realization of perfect religion, our conceptions of its character will necessarily be modified by those which we entertain of religion in the abstract. Now the ideas of the present times on this subject are confessedly very various. Some would define religion as the acknowledgment of a Divine Existence; others, as a

regulation of the will and actions with reference to such a Divine Being; while some view it as the effect produced by such a belief on the spiritual state of man, or on his whole inner life. And these different conceptions of religion are reflected in those which we have already examined with reference to Christianity. As *doctrine*, Christianity lays the chief stress on correct views of the Divine Nature, and appears to coincide most nearly with the *orthodox* notions of religion, which predominated before Kant's time. Then the doctrines of Kant assimilate, in some measure, with the Catholic conception of Christianity as a moral law, since he founds religion upon ethics, and teaches the identity of the religious and the moral. Again, the definition of religion as a habit of mind, or state of feeling, corresponds with the views of those who regard Christianity as redemption; for this word, thus used, implies in its object a complete inward change; and lastly, the conception of Christianity as the instrument of an entire union with God, is the natural result of considering religion as that influence which brings the *whole* spiritual existence of man into relation with the Deity; always providing that the expression "union of God with man," be employed, not in a pantheistic sense, but only as denoting a mental and spiritual process.

The three first definitions contain, as we are willing to allow, some truth, but only partial and imperfect truth, until all are comprehended and reconciled under the last, highest conception. This, then, is the only one fully satisfactory, inasmuch as it not only embraces all the others, but results immediately from the original, innate character of Christianity; which is essentially life, action, history, not a mere code of moral, metaphysical, and logical axioms, enveloped in myths and symbols. These arguments, however, have no weight in favour of the pantheistic view; they can apply only to the theistic, which regards redemption as the free, voluntary act of the living God, and teaches that the union of the Divine

with the human nature, as exemplified in Christ, may be realized in every individual, in proportion as, by this redeeming influence of the Gospel, he is purified from sin. The correct and characteristic expression, therefore, will be, not "Union of the Divine and Human," which may admit of a pantheistic interpretation, but the more definite form, "Union of God and Man," that is, of a God not depending for individual consciousness on his human manifestations, but existing personally and independently, as a free self-conscious spirit,—with man, who is not God by nature (the Man-God instead of the Divine Man), but is made a sharer in the Divine perfections, only by a free act of Divine condescension.

We shall now proceed to examine more closely the conclusions which we have at present somewhat anticipated.

III.

First, then, Christianity has been considered as Doctrine; that is, as consisting in certain opinions respecting God and His relation to the world.

Here, again, we find two divisions. Some have adhered firmly to the positive character of Christianity as a revelation, claiming for it full authority on the score of its divine origin, and holding as doctrine whatever the Scriptures, as the divinely accredited and inspired record, contain—whether historical, moral, or supernatural. Others, abandoning the historical portion of Christianity, as the merely indifferent form in which its moral and religious principles were first embodied, have assigned to theology the office of freeing the sound kernel of essential truth from the worthless and perishable rind in which it was at first enveloped, and of making it visible in its purity. The former are the Supernaturalists, the latter are the Rationalists. They agree in regarding Christianity as a form of religious doctrine. But here the distinction is immediately apparent. Superna-

turalism receives, along with the other declarations of Scripture, all that is there asserted respecting the person of the Redeemer; but it receives this rather as one doctrine amongst other doctrines, than as the vital principle of Christianity. The naturalists, on the other hand, rejecting all that is personal and historical in religion, do not hesitate to express the wish "that the founder of that beneficent religion, which bears his name, had remained for ever unknown to the Christian world, so that they might have benefited by the truths which he taught, and have escaped all abuses with reference to his person."

According to the latter theory, which aims at effacing every distinguishing peculiarity of Christianity, any investigation of its essence becomes of course impossible. Indeed, such a mode of treating an historical subject deserves mention only as an intellectual curiosity. But the former habit of thought, though retaining more of the substance of Christianity, is little better adapted for the comprehension of its spirit. There is a falsity at the very outset, in the assumption that Christianity is exclusively or even principally to be regarded as a doctrine. And this error proceeds both from incorrect views of religion in general, and from unscriptural conceptions of the origin and progress of Christianity.

Belief certainly forms an element of religion; but he who studies religion only intellectually loses sight of its vital principle. Its *essentials* are love and veneration, a deep pervading sense of dependence on God, of communion with and submission to him. Were religion only Doctrine, it would be susceptible, like logic or mathematics, of exact demonstration. Doctrine was certainly necessary as the first vehicle of communication: the true creative energy to which its influence was owing, consisted, not in the propagation of abstract ideas, but in the general impression of piety, as exemplified in the whole of life. Thus among individuals, parents and instructors exercise their highest influence by

means of example; and the religious teachers of the human race, prophets and founders of sects, accomplish their work, in proportion to its elevation, by the immediate operation of their own minds and feelings on those of others. Very far indeed is the word "doctrine" from expressing the rich, manifold fulness of meaning, which we are accustomed to condense in the terms "religion," and "piety;" and to pronounce a religion perfect, and at the same time to define it as mere *doctrine*, is an absolute contradiction in terms; since such a religion,—a mere system of belief on divine subjects,—would be incapable of producing a sound, effectual piety, and can thus be, in fact, no religion at all.

And indeed, Christianity is far from representing itself as such a system, nor has it been so considered, at *any* period, by its most enlightened advocates. In one point of view it undoubtedly *is* doctrine, but not in the modern didactic sense of the term; for as a *doctrine* in this sense it might indeed have founded a school, but never a church, a universal religion. Christianity is doctrine, inasmuch as it relates what actually happened; it is testimony, glad tidings, *gospel.* Not by axioms and deductions, but by religious and moral principles embodied in deeds, has Christianity expanded the spiritual consciousness of mankind. Doctrine followed in the second place, to teach and bear witness to these deeds; but it possesses life and efficacy only in so far as the original spirit has been imbibed, and can be communicated by the teacher. In this sense the apostles and the evangelists, as the first heralds of the gospel, preceded its more systematic teachers; and in all ages the church has commenced with bearing witness to gospel truths, and has then proceeded to teach and reduce them to a science; but the real strength of the doctrine has ever been in that spirit which was first embodied in the life of Christ, and caught, in a smaller or larger measure, by his followers. Certainly, the facts of Christianity are valuable, not merely as facts, but as realizing the

highest moral and religious ideas. These may be deduced from the facts, and compressed into a system. We thus obtain a code of religious doctrine, in a form more or less popular; but hence theologians, and their disciples among the laity, have been led to consider Christianity itself as a mere compendium of doctrine. This, however, is to confound a science with its object. For popular communication, and analytical examination, Christianity must indeed be reduced to *doctrine;* but it remains always, in essence, Life and Action.

But supposing that we are to regard Christianity principally as doctrine, we must still ask:—What is the distinctive peculiarity of this doctrine? This must evidently consist, not in this or that religious or moral dogma, since these (as for example the doctrines of God's universal presence, of the creation, of eternal life, of love as the highest commandment, &c.) can be frequently proved to have been held by Christianity in common with other sects; but in what Christ declares respecting himself, his relation to God, and the position in which he placed mankind with reference to God; and, again, in the declarations of the apostles with reference to him, his person and work. Here we immediately pass from the doctrine to its object, namely, the manifestation in Christ of the new, highest, perfect, religious life. The essential point in the history of Christ is his own character; this is developed by the whole course of his life; it is gathered partly from himself, partly from the testimony borne by others to the impression made upon them. Only as *life* is Christianity the light of the world; and Christ himself clearly intimates this, since he does not say, My doctrine is the truth, but, "I am the truth," adding immediately that he also is the life.

We have hitherto paid no attention to the contest between the Supernaturalists and Naturalists, nor remarked on the *one-sidedness* of both methods of interpretation. But this is

another proof how untenable is the assumption on which both are founded.

Supernaturalism derives religion from special scriptural revelation, and confines belief exclusively to what is thus revealed; while the exercise of reason becomes almost nominal. Naturalism refers religion entirely to man's own consciousness, to reason, reflection, moral necessity, the contemplation of nature; and either wholly deprecates any dependence on revelation, or allows it a merely nominal influence; employing Scripture in the way of illustration, confirmation, or elucidation, but not considering it as the primal fount and sufficient authority. To the one party, religion is something wholly divine, without any admixture of the human or historical element; to the other, something entirely human, without any immediate divine aid or agency; for when they use the term Revelation, and even add to this the epithet *immediate*, they only mean, what is often intended by the common use of the word, those capacities which God has implanted in Man, and those lessons derivable from the course of nature and events, for the knowledge of Himself.

From *neither* point of view can Religion, still less Christianity, be fitly estimated; for both systems embrace only a portion of that which living Religion offers as a whole; they tear asunder what is properly inseparable. All true religion has both a divine and a human character, and with Christianity this is especially the case. The Divine Being—as no one will now dispute—is not a wholly isolated existence, dwelling apart from the world; but, though independent and personal, is at every moment present *in* the world, pervading and regulating both the natural and the spiritual universe. Thus nothing can be or happen without God; while, however, He leaves to natural causes their so-called independent operation, and to individuals their free agency. At the same time it follows from His nature, as Spirit and Love, that He should communicate Himself to His creatures, receive them

into intercourse with Himself, and thus impart to them some measure of the fulness of His own blessedness. This is at once the origin and the consummation of Religion; God reveals and communicates Himself; man accepts this revelation, and enters into this communion. All genuine religion is therefore of divine origin. But this is only one side of the question; there is another, also of much importance. This divine message can be received by mankind only through means adapted to human capacities. Revelation has to work upon the human mind, with all the faculties and susceptibilities with which it has been endowed for this very purpose, and which constitute its rational character. Nor is this all; this mind, at whatever period revelation is communicated, must be in some particular stage of progress, and under some peculiar historical influences. Thus all true, living religion must have also a human form, an historical impress and character. But while this is the case with all religion, it is especially so with Christianity. No religion is at once so divine and so human, so creative and original, and at the same time so deeply and grandly historical, as this; and in none are the two elements so entirely and so indissolubly united. The grand ideas which form the basis of all religion are here presented in their greatest perfection and simplicity; God manifests Himself in a form wholly corresponding with His character, and imbued with His spirit; and this type of His perfections is a *man*, thinking, feeling, acting, and suffering; *as* a man, exemplifying every human quality in its entire simplicity and truth, condescending lovingly to the smallest human interests, and thus investing them with a divine glory. Viewed in this light, Christianity appears divine in its essence, human in its form; divine in its origin, human in its embodiment and development. It possesses the full originality and independence of a new religious creation, such as could proceed only from an immediate divine impulse; and is yet in the fullest sense historical,

bearing the most intimate relation to the whole previous training and progress of the human race. It appeared when the fulness of time was accomplished, it is entwined by a thousand threads with *reality;* and has been, ever since its first appearance in the world, so completely the moving spring of history, that we cannot but regard it as the germ of the higher development of humanity; while, superior both to reason and nature, it is at the same time the highest Reason and the truest Nature. For no reason could have invented, no reflection discovered, that which forms the central point of Christianity,—the self-sacrifice made by divine love on the cross, for the sake of sinful humanity; and yet both recognize therein the only effectual means for the redemption and regeneration of humanity. A life in which self is wholly annihilated, and absorbed in the Deity, is not the work of unaided nature; and yet our inmost consciousness reveres therein the true restoration and glorification of human nature. Only as this entire amalgamation of the divine and human elements can Christianity be clearly defined, or in any suitable degree estimated.

The systems which we have examined, however, destroy this vital union, and divide what has its full significance only as a whole. For the Supernaturalists, Christianity is exclusively divine, superhuman; they never fully enter into either its historical or its inward spiritual sense; never appropriate it to themselves as life and spirit—as inherent, *human* truth. By the naturalists and rationalists it is deprived of its divine, creative impulse—of its actual connexion with a higher world; they comprehend and explain it well in its merely human and historical character, but, at the same time, they strike its death-blow, by severing it from its root. And both systems, as has been before remarked, share the same fundamental error of regarding it as Doctrine, not as Life; while only in the latter character does it present to us Christ in his full glory as the Prince of Life, by whom life and immortality

were brought to light; only thus can we comprehend the influence which not merely cultivates the understanding, and corrects errors of opinion, but alters the whole constitution of life and society.

IV.

Again: since Christianity has an essentially ethical character, since it proposes for its ultimate object the sanctification of the human race individually and collectively, and appears in history as the greatest Moral Power, it has been thought best defined as such. This is the leading principle of Kant, and of the Rationalism to which he gave rise. Rationalism agrees with Naturalism in rejecting positive revelation, and deducing religion exclusively from human consciousness; but differs from it, in making *practical*, not *theoretical* Reason the foundation, and thus drawing its arguments chiefly from considerations of *moral* interests and necessities; in manifesting less polemical antipathy to the historical element, and in preserving, at least among its best representatives, a more earnest and rational spirit.

Kant, as is well known, arrived, by means of his metaphysical inquiries, at the result, that abstract reflection can attain no certainty respecting any thing *divine*, and beyond the limits of sense. Unaided theoretical Reason may as probably deny God, as prove His existence. If God, the main object of religion, is to become a certainty to us, it must be by some other means. Thus, there is also a practical Reason which acknowledges the absolute supremacy of the Moral Law, and strives after a moral perfection which cannot be realized in this world of sense, but only in some ideal, spiritual existence. Hence follows the reality of the Ideal, Divine, Eternal. But since virtue, which is unconditionally commanded by the Moral Law, constitutes the highest good only when united with happiness, and yet the insurance of this union rests not in our own

power, we are compelled to believe in a supreme, intelligent, and moral Power, by whom this will be effected; and since the Moral Law also requires, in certain circumstances, that life should be sacrificed for virtue, we conclude hence the reality of some future state, in which self-sacrificing virtue will receive its reward. We thus obtain the fundamental ideas of religion:—*God* and *immortality*,—as the necessary results of the Moral Law, and of that internal consciousness, which, by the disciples of this school, is considered the only means of certainty on such subjects. If it is my duty to be virtuous, there must be a God who rewards virtue, and an eternal life, in which that reward will be bestowed.

Precisely in the same manner has the defence of Christianity been conducted. Not only church doctrines, but even the general belief which lies at their foundation, have been rejected, so far, at least, as they lay claim to an independent, certain knowledge of divine things; on the other hand, the moral and practical elements have been brought pre-eminently forward, and all that is historical interpreted in a so-called moral and practical sense. Christianity has been reduced to a moral law, which indeed appeared at first under the form of a divine command, but is essential and self-evident only in so far as it approves itself to the understanding as *moral truth*. Christ, it is said, taught at first in a popular, historical form, with perhaps even miraculous corroboration, what has since, purified from this positive, historical element, been recognized as the imperative command of reason,—as the result and unalienable deduction from the moral law; and, which is of the highest importance, he not only *taught* but *practised* this, and thus constituted himself the prototype of human nature as acceptable to God, and became the appropriate originator of the new universal Moral Life. Here is assigned to the Founder of Christianity the honour of a great moral lawgiver for the whole human race, of a moral type and example, even though in a sense rather symbolic than his-

torical; while to Christianity is allowed the high merit of having first taken an enlarged view of the struggle between the good and evil principles in man—of having first efficaciously promoted, and satisfactorily predicted, the victory of the former. Certainly, the idea has hence arisen that a *God* was not needed to secure this victory; that a moral law of the universe might suffice, and that a pure *belief* in the ultimate triumph of good might satisfy the moral wants of man. Religion, also, in the popular conception of this theory, has been reduced to a mere system of ethics, and Christianity regarded only as the most convenient stimulus to a virtuous, rational course of life; but we will not charge these perversions to the original principle, which, especially according to its first great enunciator, was far higher and more spiritual.

We do not undervalue the full importance of this chiefly *moral* view of Christianity. It has a superiority over the exclusively doctrinal conception, inasmuch as it calls more attention to the inward strength, the active principle of Christianity,—as it again places the Founder, though in a symbolical sense, in an important, central position. We must also accord to this system, as carried out with deep earnestness and great moral energy by its originator, the credit of not only having thrown much light on one highly important aspect of Christianity; but of having kept alive a sympathy for the Christian religion in an age peculiarly addicted to exclusively *moral* views;—nay, if we may reckon as a merit an unintended, but inevitable result, of having, by its exemplification of Christianity as a Law, prepared the way for its fresh development as a Gospel. Still, this view can be by no means considered as complete or satisfactory, with regard either to religion in the abstract, or to Christianity.

That is to say; piety, though inseparable, in its healthy state, from morality, is still far from being only a means, a condition, or a consequence of morality; but has an independent existence and a peculiar sphere. *Religious* ideas

assert for themselves, in a well-organized, uncorrupted human mind, as much importance as *moral* ones; and piety, as the whole history of mankind proves, is to a thoughtful individual something as unchangeable as morality itself. It is the feeling not merely of its own inherent dignity, but of that of its Object also, which prevents the religious sentiment from becoming subordinate to the moral. To a mind imbued with the former, God is not only the highest, but the most *certain* idea; *only* through this idea do we understand the world and ourselves; and while every moral principle compels the conclusion—if I am required to be virtuous, there must be a God and an eternal life;—this very conclusion in its turn introduces a wholly different train of reasoning. Thus:—*because* there exists an Eternal Primal Spirit, an all-embracing, creative intelligence, *therefore* am I a rational being, formed in His image; because He is holy, I should be so also; because He is love, and has made me a partaker in His life, *therefore* will the love which He has kindled, the life which He has bestowed, endure beyond death, and be eternal as His own divine essence. *Religion* knows nothing of *claims* upon God, of merit and reward; it views the whole existence of Man only as His gift, refers to Him whatever is good therein; would marvel to hear of any farther reward being demanded for such goodness, which is its own sufficient recompence;—but it trusts confidently that a spirit, which receives the idea of the Eternal, is itself eternal; that a soul which loves and is penetrated by the Divine Essence, has within it some portion of the Divine life; and fears not, that the infinite Love, which called into existence this divinely-conscious being, will forsake it even in death. This faith, conscious of its own importance, disdains the imputation of owing its existence or efficacy to moral necessity. Still, the consciousness of this necessity must always hold its place in every rational mind. Thus we shall only avoid error by considering Religion and Morality, not as opposing or excluding each other,

but as forming together one harmonious whole, and constituting, in combination, the healthy god-like type of humanity. And from these two elements, fitly blended, is derived that holiest faculty of our being, *conscience*, in which both are inseparably united; for conscience is not merely a *moral*, or a *religious* sense, but both at once. It requires morality, but it demands this morality in the name and by the authority of God, the Holy One; it is a Divine Voice, but one whose commands have ever a moral force and tendency; which exhorts to *do* or to *forbear*. Since this is the case, a doctrine which makes religious faith only the *result* or the *aid* of Morality;—which would prefer cultivating the latter independently, and, only because it finds difficulty in the task, admits religion as an assistant;—can never satisfactorily explain the *Essence* of Religion, and still less that of Christianity.

For Christianity has assuredly an ultimate moral aim—that of sanctification; and is so pervaded by the ethical spirit, that it may be styled, in the highest and widest sense, the *only* perfectly moral religion. But it still remains pre-eminently and essentially *Faith*—deep, self-sufficing, unwavering consciousness of the Divine existence, submission to God, peace and joy in Him, communion with Him; and in this very *Faith* lies its *Morality*—that love of God which is the origin of all goodness, and itself originates in the primal, voluntary love of God towards us. And if one element—the Religious or the Moral, Faith or Love—is to be distinguished as the first, it must be obvious that Love is derived from Faith rather than Faith from Love. In Faith, Love and Moral authority are comprehended; so that these elements can as little be separated from it, "as the light of the fire from its warmth." The character of Christ, in particular, can be very imperfectly understood, if we regard it as consisting wholly either in morality or in piety; the peculiarity of his nature lay in the most perfect combination of the two—in Holiness; a life *from* and *in* God; and if in this case, as in

no other, it is the *Founder* who gives the distinctive impress to his religion, we can then fully appreciate Christianity, only by taking this union as the type of *its* character.

Christian faith is certain of God's existence, not because such an assumption is necessary for moral purposes, but because it possesses in *itself* a pledge of its truth. It adheres with equal stedfastness to the belief in an eternal life; not because it expects therein to be rewarded for a too defective virtue, but because it already possesses this life; because eternity is its essential element; because it is impelled from death to life; because what is born of God must be secured and preserved by Him; because the spirit which has once become a partaker in the life of Christ, must also participate in that eternity to which his whole being bore witness. Christianity also warns and threatens; it may be called, in the striking words of a gifted man, "the conscience of the conscience,"—the conscience of the whole human race; but in seeking for its distinctive characteristic, we must bring preeminently forward, not what it requires, but what it gives and secures; not its warnings and threatenings, but its declarations, blessings, and acts of grace. Christianity is great and unique, not because it is a Divinely-authorized Conscience, but because, without injuring the conscientious faculty in man—nay, while giving to this the greatest possible acuteness—it at the same time quiets the conscience; because by perfect love it casts out fear; because it shows, that God is greater than our hearts. It is not, like the moral law, essentially a command, but a fulfilment, a satisfaction; not a demand in the name of God, but a divine power and gift, which, when once received into the heart, works, voluntarily and unbidden, the highest morality. Didactic commands are merged in the great words: Let us love Him, for He hath first loved us. Duty, which in morality, as conceived by Kant, is everything, becomes *inclination;* the arbitrary command is changed into an involuntary operation of that love

which is in itself the fulfilling of the law. Only in this character have the worthiest representatives of Christianity at all times viewed it; and so must we consider it if we would assign to it its fitting rank among the various forms of religion.

It is obvious, that in regarding Christianity as Doctrine or as a Moral Law *only*, we lose sight of that which essentially distinguishes it from other religions, from Paganism and Judaism. As mere Doctrine, it would not, though more correct, differ *specifically* from the systems of the heathen world; nor as mere Law,—though higher and purer in its demands,—from Judaism, or from Islamism, which agrees with Judaism in this characteristic, being also a law-giving religion. It might be higher and better, but would still remain of the same species,—a purified Judaism, so to speak; not something wholly new—different in principle. In both cases there would be a difficulty of explaining how it could contain within itself a *new birth*, both of the individual and of the race; how it could have produced characters like Paul or John, or originated the entire Christian church, with all therein comprehended, not of *ideas* or *commands* alone, but of power and efficacy.

V.

Again, for the purpose of defining more clearly this distinctive *original* character of Christianity, and bringing into fuller light those ideas connected with it which we are accustomed to condense in the word "Gospel," Schleiermacher, more historical than the Rationalists, brought back every thing to the real historical root of Christianity—the *person* of its *founder*; but while the theoretical Supernaturalists and the practical Rationalists see in that Founder, on the one hand, only a teacher of doctrine,—on the other, only a moral lawgiver,—Schleiermacher went deeper, and viewed him in the more comprehensive office of a *Redeemer;* thus assigning

to Christianity its own peculiar dignity, as the Religion of Redemption. He had no intention to deny its claims as Doctrine, still less would he have disputed its ethical character; on the contrary, he defined it especially as the religion of *perfection*, the moralizing and sanctifying religion; but he urged, that to distinguish it from other monotheistic forms of religion, which likewise declare doctrine and give moral rules, we must draw the chief attention to that principle which has constituted it, from the beginning, a *peculiar* religion. This he found in the idea of Redemption, and especially in the mode in which this idea is realized in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. For though the notion of redemption (that is, of liberation from sin and its consequence, or, as Schleiermacher takes it, the removal of that which disturbs the unity between the material and the spiritual life) is found in other religions, and its accomplishment aimed at by means of purifications, penances, and sacrifices;—there still remains this essential difference: that Christ does not merely, like other founders of religions, appoint the means of redemption, but *fulfils* it by the whole course of his life; and that as Sin, by which the redeeming power of other men is impeded, finds in him no place, so the redemption which he accomplished is unlimited and universal, embracing the whole human race. Thus, in Christianity the individual character of the Founder is interwoven much more closely with the whole religion, than is the case with the founders of the two other monotheistic religions with which we are acquainted. The systems to which these men gave rise, were founded *through* their agency as Divine instruments, and were binding upon themselves equally with others; whilst Christ was the most essential element of *his* religion, and stood, as the Redeemer, in a unique position, as distinguished from those to be redeemed. Schleiermacher accordingly defines Christianity as Piety, exercising *perfecting* influence on human nature, and concentrated in the idea of redemption through the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

By this definition, a great step is certainly gained. Since Redemption does not address itself exclusively either to the understanding or the will, but influences the whole inner man, a deeper and fuller idea is gained of religion; and Christianity acquires more historical consistency, when contemplated from its centre of vitality. The influence of Schleiermacher's views has created an epoch in theology; and no one not incurably wedded to old errors, is now in danger of mistaking Christianity for mere doctrine or mere morality. But, even in his definition, the subject is not exhausted; the finishing touch is wanted; we find in his conception of Christianity the same fault which pervades all his views on such subjects.

Christianity undoubtedly is what it is, by being a redeeming power. But side by side with the idea of Redemption (on which point we will not here dispute with Schleiermacher, though the peculiar character of *Sin* is not sufficiently considered by him), we find in Christianity one of at least equal importance — that of Reconciliation. Perfect Redemption presupposes Reconciliation; for not till man is fully reconciled and re-united to God, can he feel himself wholly redeemed. Thus from Redemption we are referred to Reconciliation, as something antecedent and higher; a point which should not be left out of view in estimating the *distinctive peculiarity* of the Christian religion. Again, Redemption is something essentially internal, it is liberation from the yoke of sin, restoration of the harmony between the material and the spiritual life; Reconciliation, on the other hand, implies an external relation, it restores the appropriate connexion between the sinner and the Holy God. The former is a matter of feeling, and consists in an abiding state of mind (in a consciousness, first of the need, and next of the efficacy, of Redemption); the latter involves the necessity of external Divine influence, and has something circumstantial and objective (forgiveness of sin, and justification of the sinner before God), implying an

objective recognition of the Divine existence. Now Schleiermacher, according to his notions of *faith* as entirely subjective, and his conception of *religion* as a state of feeling, has here also, with perfect consistency, adhered exclusively to the idea of internal experience. But while Christianity is a revelation only in so far as it is Redemption, its full redeeming power consists in this:—that it communicates a higher, more perfect knowledge of God; and this God it teaches us to reverence as the Father, as Love, as Him who sent the Redeemer into the world, and thus revealed to man His own nature and perfections. We thus require an idea which expresses, better than that of Redemption can do, this objective influence exercised by God upon man; and this idea is found in the word Reconciliation. Again, as Redemption rests upon Reconciliation, so *both* depend on the peculiar, individual character of Christ. To this character we are finally referred, as the last and highest point; as possessing its own significance and efficacy, independent of the *works*, in which, however, it was naturally manifested. Here we have the source of all which Christianity *is* and *has effected;* and herein, therefore, must we seek its essential character and distinguishing principle.

VI.

If we now inquire, What is it in Christ's character, by means of which he exercises upon individuals and upon mankind this redeeming and reconciling power? What was the condition on which alone he could become a perfect Redeemer?—the answer which first presents itself is this:—It was his *life*, which, while wholly pervaded by that spirit of holiness, truth, and love, which we must acknowledge as the spirit of God, at the same time represents and glorifies whatever is truly human and natural; it is that love which, though blessed and self-sufficing in its own perfection, expands in

the widest and most active sympathy. But this life itself has its central point of vitality; and this, as the theology of the present day, not only in its general tendency, but in all its various shades of opinion, declares, consists in the *perfect union in his person of the Divine and Human.* This is the living fountain of Christianity; this is the signet which impresses thereon its predominating distinctive character.

In fact, all classes of Christians,—the orthodox disciples of the Church, and the advocates of exclusive scriptural authority; the pietists and the speculatists; nay, even to a certain extent, the mythics,—agree *theoretically* in this universal principle. But there are many differences, and even positive contradictions, in their modes of interpreting and applying it. We cannot here enter into all these modifications, but we must point out the main distinction. It consists in this: the union of the Deity with humanity may be regarded either in a pantheistic sense, as a matter of *consciousness*, of *thought* and *feeling*,—as something capable of universal application; or, according to the principles of Christian theism, and the declarations of Scripture, as something real, actual, and individual. From these two leading conceptions branch a number of results, still retaining their mutual opposition. Certainly this principle, in whichever sense interpreted, must contain the highest, most important truth, and involve within itself the secret of that mighty, world-controlling influence exercised by Christianity; for assuredly, in the whole circle of religious thought, there is nothing more sublime than the consciousness in man of an entire union with the Deity. This leading idea, whether it mean that God communicates himself to man, or that man learns to recognize his own eternal, god-like nature, must give a different aspect to all things; and a religion founded thereon must differ essentially from all in which such a principle is wanting. But the *mode* also in which this principle is received, whether as a matter of consciousness or as a

revealed fact; as a "union of the Divine and human," applicable to the whole race of man; or as a "union of God with Man," which can be accomplished only in a certain manner and under certain moral conditions,—is of the greatest importance for the true comprehension of Christianity; and this question therefore deserves an especial examination.

VII.

Hegel viewed Christianity as the true, absolute, self-evident religion. It appeared to him such, because it declares the *unity of the Divine and Human*, because its real purport is God's communication of Himself to man. On this principle he undertook to reconcile Christianity and philosophy, or to show that their highest results were identical. Both agree in the same great truth; only, philosophy treats as a speculative conception, capable of universal application, what Christianity demonstrates practically, and views as an *individual* fact, in the person of the Divine Man. It is the nature of God to communicate himself to man, and the nature of man to become a partaker of the Divine Essence. The distinctive peculiarity of Christianity is this, that it reminds man of the Deity which dwells within him; that it solves the dissonance between the Divine and human, between this world and the next; that it has brought down heaven to earth, and merged all discrepancies between the finite and infinite into one enlarged, comprehensive view of existence. The first satisfactory, intelligible working out of this conception is the triumph of that modern philosophy, of which Spinoza was the chief originator.

This definition was, however, far from acceptable to the later disciples of Hegel's school. The peace which he sought to establish between Christianity and philosophy appeared to them delusive. They viewed the case quite differently, especially with reference to Christianity. Some said, Christi-

anity, far from teaching the identity of the finite and infinite, takes, on the contrary, for its fundamental principle, the independent existence of God *beyond* the world, and thus stands in direct opposition to the speculative principle which represents Him as dwelling *in* the world. Others maintain: Christianity indeed teaches a unity of the Divine and Human, but only in a single individual, in one solitary instance, which, in a view of human life as a whole, may easily become imperceptible; and even this depends on the doctrine of another state of being; so that, as far as all other human and natural interests are concerned, the gulf remains, and the dissonance remains unreconciled. It is indeed admitted by the supporters of this last objection, that to even this *one* point of union between the Divine and human, Christianity is indebted for its empire over the world's history, inasmuch as it thereby originated a new spiritual development; nay, the Christian conception of this union is acknowledged to be truer than any which are to be met with in previous religions. Thus, even here, this conception is allowed to be the highest *specific* distinction of Christianity; but not only is the actual, historical realization of this union in Christ denied, and regarded as the decoration bestowed upon him, as a lay-figure, by the blind veneration of the church, but it is urged that, as this union is with regard to Christian faith only momentary and transient, while the great truths of God's perpetual communication of Himself to the whole human race, and of the Deity dwelling in man, are not recognized, therefore the difficulty is not yet surmounted; that, except in Christ's own person, the ideas of God and man, heaven and earth, this world and the next, still remain unreconciled; that their union is, therefore, never viewed as a present fact, but as something by-gone in Christ, and *future* in the blessedness of heaven.

We have thus, in the same school, three modes of interpretation. They agree in receiving, as the highest truth, the

doctrine of pantheism and the identity of Divine and human things—of God's absolute existence in the world; but they differ in a highly significant manner. The first regards Christianity and philosophy as essentially coinciding; the second, as inherently opposed; the third, as differing on the whole, but agreeing in one single point, which point, however, though the most important and influential in Christianity, is said to have owed to modern speculation its first development into a world-embracing system of truth.

If we now contemplate this school as a whole, we must allow it the merit of recognizing that which is most valuable in Christianity; but while acknowledging this central point, the disciples of Hegel reduce it to a *caput mortuum*, and degrade what in Christianity is *life*, *reality*, *moral energy*, to an unsatisfactory abstract speculation. For what these speculatists call the union of the Divine and human, does not imply that these two principles, originally distinct, were actually and perfectly blended in the character of Christ, and that, under his influence, the same union may be realized in all mankind; but that Deity and humanity are originally and eternally identical, and in their essence can never be distinguished; so that God is only the abstract truth of humanity, and Man the embodied manifestation of the Deity; and that thus Man, at a certain stage of his development, must necessarily arrive at a knowledge of his true being,—that is, of his divinity or oneness with God. This stage, they say, was attained in Christianity; but it matters little whether it was first realized in the consciousness of Christ himself, or, through his means, in his disciples. But, it is further urged, the form in which this truth was first presented to the world was a very imperfect one; inasmuch as the union which exists in all mankind, was there represented as realized in one solitary example; modern philosophy first stripped off the useless husk, and brought to maturity the speculative germ therein contained. By this very process, however, the

whole significance of the original form was lost; some were desirous, as it had already an historical power, of retaining it in a symbolical sense; others flung it wholly aside, like a ladder when the height is attained. The heart of Christianity was examined with a sharper vision, but only that aim might be taken for the deadly shaft.

But if we now inquire separately into the above-mentioned views, we shall at once reject, as unworthy of refutation, that which represents Christianity as a mere abstract theory of the invisible world. Whoever has even a superficial acquaintance with the subject, must be aware that the Christian religion, while distinguishing God from the world, recognizes the existence of God *in* the world, and of the world *through* Him; that it teaches His power of communicating Himself to His creatures, while denying that His being is merged in theirs. But it is again objected, that Christianity recognizes an absolute union of the Divine and Human in Christ's person alone. There is here, indeed, an error in conception, since the capacity for union of God existed not in Christ alone, but was awakened, by his redeeming influence, in his faithful disciples. Nor does Christianity, as these objections affirm, leave human and divine things in other respects unreconciled; heaven is not regarded merely as an invisible state, nor its blessedness as something wholly future; both are represented as capable of realization even here, at this present time, in this earthly life. But the *identity* of material and spiritual life, in the sense of Hegel's followers, Christianity indeed does not admit. *One* dissonance it teaches still exists; the dissonance of Sin. Every one perceives, by his own conscience, the existence of Sin, and is aware that through it he is at variance with himself; still more, that he is in opposition, in a state of hostility to a holy God. To deny the existence of this dissonance, we must deny that of Sin, or of God, or of both. To deny the former, implies the

annihilation of the *moral*, the latter, that of the *religious* perception; the denial of *both* involves the destruction of man's higher nature, of his capacity for the Holy. At any rate, whoever finds himself in either of these cases, must at least entirely reject Christianity, which, unless this dissonance be acknowledged, is necessarily devoid of meaning. Philosophy may logically solve the discord; but by this logical solution no conscience has ever yet been quieted, no aspiration realized, no sinner born again to a new life. Men, in whom a speculative philosophy has swallowed up all other interests, has stifled even the moral sense, and bewildered the conscience, may fancy themselves satisfied, when they only *reason away* Sin, without having freed themselves from its influence; or when, by their sophisms, they convert it into a *necessity*, and thus refer it to a Divine originator. But where the conscience is yet alive and wakeful, where the idea of the Holy still exists in its strength and purity, where free will is not wholly abandoned for necessity,—there must the antagonism between Good and Evil, between Sin and Holiness, be deeply felt; there must a solution, beyond what mere reason can afford, be required and sought;—a solution which is in fact Redemption; which not only satisfies the reason, but tranquillizes the conscience, and places the whole man in a new relation to the holy God. Such a solution, such a Redemption, is given by Christianity. Admitting the full force of the opposition, it places in the clearest light the contrast between purity and sin, between God and the world; but it then removes the difficulty, by showing us the entire union of God with Man, in one actual human life; and thus reveals a redemption, depending, not indeed on a sudden perception, but on a difficult moral process. Here we find united all those conditions which have been insisted upon, separately, by other systems; but unless we could change the whole character of Christianity, we can conceive of it in no other than

that of Moral Theism ;—that is, as a religion not dividing, but distinguishing, God and the World ;—acknowledging God in His absolute holiness, and only *through* holiness, leading to union with Him.

VIII.

That Christ himself was conscious of his perfect union with God, and that he produced, upon all those around him who were susceptible of such a feeling, the impression of an existence pervaded by the fulness of the Divine spirit and nature, there can be no doubt. This feeling is indeed variously expressed by the different apostles ; by John, in his doctrine of the Logos, the eternal, divine word, which became flesh ; by Paul, when he represents Christ as the brightness of God's glory, and the perfect image of His person ; while the others set forth still more simply their impression of the intimate, immediate communion of the Son with the Father ;—but amidst all diversities of expression, the main idea remains the same, and warrants us in assuming this as the essential feature of Christianity. Now when men of such variously-constituted minds are found to agree in so important, peculiar, and original a conception—for neither the pagan accounts of divine incarnations and god-descended men, nor the Jewish notions of the Messiah, brought home to the mind this idea, as we find it in Christianity—we cannot regard this agreement as a matter of chance, but must consider it the result of an internal necessity, inherent in the nature of Christianity, growing out of the impression produced by the word, the spirit, and the life of Christ ; and confirmed by the entire harmony between this historical manifestation, and that inward perception of the godlike, which through it was first awakened to full consciousness. But the main point must still be Christ's representation of himself ; the manner in which he, lowly and truthful as he was, expressed himself

regarding his relation to God. And here our only choice is between the supposition of a visionary self-idolatry—in which case Christ can no longer remain to us a great, pure-minded man—or a belief in the truth of the consciousness which he expressed. But were internal proofs wanting for the latter alternative, we have external evidence even in that world-swaying and world-pervading influence, for which no pious fiction can account; which can proceed only from a real, living power.

Nor have we less clear evidence of Christ's own desire, that his life and spirit should be shared by his followers; that this life should be perpetuated in them, and become, through their instrumentality, the life of mankind. Both these truths—Christ's consciousness of his union with God, and his desire to communicate the same privilege to his followers—are expressed as the highest ideas of Christianity, by the fourth gospel, in the most varied forms and applications. Thus Christ, himself glorified by the Father, desires to be glorified again in his disciples: they are commanded to partake of his flesh and blood, that thereby they may receive his life. But all is concentrated in the words,—"That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us;"—and again,—"I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou lovest them, even as thou lovest me." All which is God's is Christ's, and this divine fulness he will impart to his followers; or, as the apostle Paul inversely expresses it,—"All is yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

If this fundamental principle is not merely taught but realized in Christianity, three results naturally follow. First, a religion which contains this truth must be distinguished chiefly by this, as its peculiar characteristic, from all other religions. Secondly, it will prove, by this very characteristic, its claim to be considered the perfect, *absolute* religion, the

faith of mankind. Thirdly, all things, viewed from this central point, will assume their due position, and appear in the best light. And this is really the case, as is now to be shown.

IX.

All Religion is essentially communion of Man with God. Can we imagine it otherwise, unless as a mere abstraction? Religion is that which stands *between* God and Man. Now if God is a living, self-conscious, personal, as well as omnipresent Spirit, and if Man is also an individual, and a being capable of spiritual intercourse:—then the relation between them cannot be one of mere reason or conception, but must have a living reality, a mutual operation. God must actually condescend and communicate Himself to Man; Man must in truth raise himself to God, and have a consciousness of His presence, not in *idea* alone, but in spirit, power, and love. Even the great minds of antiquity held this view: Socrates speaks of his monitory dæmon, Plato of a communion of man with the Deity, of which Eros (Love) is the medium. No otherwise can we understand religion, if we mean what we say in calling Conscience the voice of God within us; if we realize the idea of God's omnipresence; if we hold prayer, the breath of life, for aught but folly and self-delusion.

A perfect, undisturbed union, such as we have described, of Man with God, we conceive to have existed, though in a way unknown to ourselves, in the state of innocence, when Man had but recently come forth from the hand of his holy Creator. But this state of innocence has yielded to sin, to a state of discord with God. The office of religion is now to reconcile, to atone,—to restore, not unconscious innocence, but a union matured and strengthened by those conflicts and struggles through which man must pass to attain his spiritual ripeness.

A communion of the Human with the Divine was aimed at even by the religions before Christianity; and for this very reason, because they *were* religions. Judaism, which is strongly pervaded by the idea of holiness, and the consciousness of sin, sought this union by atonement and expiation; Paganism, in which the moral element was more or less deficient, by means of artistic representation or external services. But a true communion, much more a *union* of Man with God, was out of the question in both cases; being rendered impossible by the principles on which these systems were founded.

Paganism, as religion, never once rose to the full conception of the Divine, as something holy, spiritual, individual, superior to nature. The Godhead was pantheistically merged in nature; nature revered, apotheosized, as something Divine. The Deity was indeed represented under human forms; but this constituted no true union; since in such representations God was no longer God, but encumbered with the imperfections of a finite nature; nor man truly such, but a phantom of another state of being.

Judaism, on the other hand, was an ethical, monotheistic religion, distinguishing God from the world. But here we find a new difficulty. Whilst Paganism confused the ideas of the Divine and Human, of God and Nature, Judaism not merely *distinguished*, but *separated* them. God's influence upon nature and man was indeed acknowledged, but regarded as external rather than internal; as operating rather by extraordinary, miraculous interpositions, than in the regular, established course of things; the communication of His spirit was viewed for the most part as something momentary, transient, or confined to a definite period; after which nature and man were again left to themselves. Here, therefore, God and Man retain their true characters; but the union between them is neither true nor perfect. Christianity alone distinguishes without dividing; teaches the perfect holiness of God,

but at the same time His infinite grace and condescension ;— the distinctly *human* nature of Man, but also his divine origin and capacities. The union which it offers is not a transient infusion of the Divine spirit, in moments of ecstasy or inspiration ; but an abiding presence, pervading the whole course of life, and requiring only the ethical condition of holiness in Man. Thus the end to which all previous systems vainly aspired is here attained ; and Christianity is thereby not only definitely distinguished from Judaism and Paganism, but elevated to an essentially higher dignity, as that absolute unchangeable Truth, into which merges all that was excellent in former systems.

X.

Religion, such as we have defined it, is by its very nature, Love ; for upon love all true communion depends. It is the love of man to God, originating in his experience of the divine Love. Where this love is perfect, the highest point of the religious life is reached. This was the case with Christ. By *love* he became the embodiment of perfect religion. His mission, his subjection to suffering and death, were the work of that eternal Love, which spared not even its dearest object when fallen humanity was to be restored and blessed ; he himself entered with perfect freewill into this Divine plan ; his whole life was animated by a love, which for its purity and unconquerable endurance can only be called divine ; and as by its power he resigned himself unreservedly to God, so also he devoted himself in life, in suffering, and in death, to restore and re-unite to God his brother-men. Thus he is at once, in his own person, the most perfect revelation of God's love to Man, and the most sublime instance of human love to God, and of that devoted, self-denying love to men, as brothers, which is its natural result. Such a spectacle is presented by no other religion ; therefore only in Christianity is God known as Love ; only therein is the brotherly

love of mankind identified with the love of God, and the absence of it regarded as sin, as spiritual fratricide. But not only did former ages fail to attain this eminence; even in later times it never has been, never can be surpassed. For were another to love as perfectly as Christ—an experiment which has not been yet witnessed—this could now be accomplished only through him, and in the power of that human brotherhood which he originated; since beyond the limits which his influence has yet reached, we see no signs of even an approach to such an elevation. Thus Christianity, as the only religion which presents a perfect example of divine and human love, united in the person of its Founder, still maintains its station as the Perfect Religion.

This perfect love lies at the foundation of that entire moral and spiritual union between God and Man, which has been fixed upon as the criterion of the highest stage of religious progress. Let us even admit for a moment, what is assumed by the Speculatists, that the consciousness of this union is only an intellectual perception, first awakened in Christ, or attributed to him by the veneration of his followers. Good. We certainly do not see how the disciples arrived at the idea, unless they had sufficient ground for it in Christ. But so be it. This idea still remains the peculiar distinction of Christianity. If Religion is a mere matter of Reason, we have here the highest attainment of which Reason is capable. Such a *conception* can be surpassed only by its *realization*; and this the Christian faith, in exact contrast to modern speculation, presents to us in Christ. Even the Speculatists, indeed, aim at realizing their theory; but here speculation halts. For the true idea of *union* is wanting, that of *identity* being substituted. If Man is essentially only the manifestation of God, he cannot now for the first time *become* one with God. And besides, this union is represented as realized in the *race* of mankind; but this race is composed of individuals; and in no one of these individuals do we meet with more than a

very imperfect realization of the conception, morally understood. How then, where only refracted rays are to be seen, shall we attain to perfect light? Speculative philosophy strives to extinguish the pure, brilliant, moral Sun, and to substitute earthly lamps, which, though multiplied indefinitely, can never make one sun. Christianity, therefore, is the perfect Religion, only inasmuch as it affords us, in Christ, the only perfect Realization of this divine idea.

XI.

Viewed from this central point, all the various characteristics of Christianity assume their due position, and appear in their true light. Thus Christianity is indeed Doctrine; but the doctrine is not all; it is only the embodiment, the vehicle of that which gives to this religion its original, creative power. Like the statues of Hermes, to which Plato's Alcibiades compares Socrates, the Doctrine is only the unshaped block, which contains within it the divine image. It was necessary that Christ's character, the manifestation of which was his principal mission, should be handed down to us in his own discourses, and in the historical and doctrinal testimony of others; but indispensable as is Doctrine in this connexion, it always leads us back to that which alone makes it valuable. Christian Doctrine *gives* us Christianity; but the life of Christ *is* Christianity.

Again, the idea of *Revelation*,—which is allied to that of Doctrine, but more comprehensive,—is thus shown in its true light. Revelation does not merely imply an enlarged *theoretical* knowledge of the Divine Nature; but since, when communicated to a sinful race, it must necessarily be accompanied by Redemption from sin, it must be considered chiefly as discovering the means of salvation, as making God known in His *redeeming, saving* character. But for this purpose, the Word alone, the Doctrine, does not suffice. Revelation by

the Word is indeed far superior to the mute, veiled revelation afforded through the works of creation, but stands in its turn far below the revelation by Action. Only in *acts* can the *living* God be fully revealed, and in their saving power His spirit be manifested. This took place only partially and by obscure hints, in the preparatory revelation; in the perfect one, *all* God's will to Man was to be clearly and fully represented in a life full of grace and truth. In this and no other sense is Christianity a revelation: that in the words and deeds, the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, are fully expressed the Divine Nature, and the designs of Eternal Love for Man's salvation.

Christianity is also a Moral Law. Were it however exclusively or essentially Law, it would be only a reformed, enlarged Judaism; instead of introducing life and freedom, it must have left mankind still under the yoke and penalty of sin. A law, even the most enlightened, remains always something external and antagonistic to Man; laying down imperative rules, and visiting with censure, condemnation, and death, every violation of its precepts; and such violations will never be wanting. Love alone can give life to these dead forms; and when this is done, as in the life of Christ, the law becomes written on the heart; it is now an inward, vital principle, and can therefore no more condemn and destroy. Christianity, indeed, while in one sense it may be said to have abolished the law, is in another the perfecting and fulfilling of the law. To the unrepentant sinner, it retains its legal and judicial character; and thus, he who considers it as essentially a Moral Law, is not wholly wrong; but he has not penetrated to that deepest significance of Christianity, which constitutes it a *Gospel* to those who believe thereon. When we find Christianity spoken of as a *law*, it is as the Law of Liberty; thus involving the idea of liberation *from Law* as an external, constraining power.

Christianity is also Redemption and Reconciliation; but

all its authority in these characters may be traced back to the same source; the Union of Christ with God. On this subject, a few words of explanation must be added to what has been already said. Redemption and Reconciliation were proposed by Judaism also, but only imperfectly accomplished. The reason was, that the means employed were of a symbolical character, which might temporarily free the conscience from the feeling of sinfulness, and assure it of the Divine grace, but could not destroy sin itself, or introduce a new moral life. *This* can happen only when the redemption is accomplished by moral means: that is, in the person of a voluntary Redeemer, who, while sharing the nature of those he comes to redeem, presents in his life the realization and perfection of all that they are to aim at, and the subjugation of all which they have to overcome. Freedom from the yoke and consequence of sin, can be given only by one who is himself free. Again, as we have often urged, perfect Redemption depends upon Reconciliation: on a restored assurance of God's grace, and of union with Him. But this union can be re-established only by one who himself fully enjoys it; whose soul is animated by an all-pervading sense of the Divine Love. Doubtless the great Apostle said advisedly: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself;" since this very existence of God in Christ, was at once the origin and the means of Reconciliation.

From this main principle, both the *theological* and *anthropological* views of Christianity receive their relative importance and comparative truth. No longer contradictory, both are united and perfected in Christology. The miraculous circumstances, also, by which the career of the divine Man was attended become natural and comprehensible; since, where the Divinity enters thus into human life, higher laws and powers must be expected to manifest themselves; and especially that miracle which has been, from the commencement, the main historical buttress of Christianity—the Resurrection of

Christ—appears now the necessary result of his god-like nature; and a warrant for a similar hope in believers, by means of their union in life and spirit with him.

XII.

We may now, condensing all that has previously been said, define in the following words our precise view.

That which constitutes the specific, distinctive character of Christianity, is not its Doctrine, its Moral Law, nor even its Redeeming Power;—but the peculiar office, the moral and religious authority of its Founder, as the individual in whom the union of the Divine with the Human was fully manifested. For Doctrine, Law, and Redemption, derive their force from this individual manifestation, not it from them. This it is, which exclusively belongs to Christianity; while all other proposed characteristics have been shared to a certain degree by other religions.

Thus viewed, Christianity assumes a perfect, organic form: developing, from an *individual* centre, all its powers and gifts, it addresses itself to all mankind, whom its mission is to gather into one Kingdom of God; to organise into one fitly-compacted community of God-like men.

This conception of Christianity is not indeed entirely new. We trace it, under another form, even in the early Mysticism, and especially among the German mystics of the middle ages. In this, and in their general treatment of the subject, they are nearly allied to the speculators of modern times: only that, what in the latter is the result of reasoning, reflection, criticism, sprang in the former from a deep religious enthusiasm, and thus assumed a different aspect. The point of coincidence is this: that both regard the Spirit as alone essential, and convert the historical portion of Christianity into a mere symbol of its inward truth. Thus Christ is to them less an historical individual, than the highest type of

humanity; his history is the inner life which all should strive to realize, and through the realization of which, the *history* receives its true significance. But even among the mystics we trace two parties; the pantheistic, best represented in modern speculation by the highly-praised Eckart; and the theistic. According to the former, Christ was only the first who became *aware* of his filial relation to God; while the latter recognize a voluntary revelation on God's part, and on that of Christ, the fulfilment of the moral conditions which such a revelation required. While the pantheistic division was in a great measure the prototype of modern speculation, the *theistic*, by the depth and warmth of their religious feelings, to a certain degree prepared the way for the Reformation. But into the Reformation a new element entered. The mystics had more or less overlooked *Sin*, the dark point in human life; and the consequent necessity of Redemption and Reconciliation. Of these points, Luther's consciousness, the result of his whole nature and training, was peculiarly strong; and by him the same consciousness was powerfully awakened among the best of his contemporaries. Thus, since Reconciliation could not be accomplished by an ideal image, the historical personality of Christ was again brought prominently forward, and assumed, as it were, more of a *bodily* form. That combination of the historical and the ideal, which constitutes the true character of Christianity, was now restored; yet, by the Reformers generally, only in a partial sense. Christ was to them the true, actual Redeemer and Reconciler, but they failed to recognize that peculiarity of his character —his perfect union with God—through which he became such, and which renders him at the same time the historical type and pattern for all mankind. Here we are again recalled to the leading idea of the mystics; but while we appropriate this idea (though in a modified sense), we must not lose sight of the truth and value of the principles brought forward by the Reformation. We have therefore aimed at a definition

which should combine whatever is correct in the views both of the speculative Mystics and of the practical Reformers. The Essence of Christianity is certainly union (or oneness) with God, as exemplified in its Founder, and rendered possible to his followers; but this truth is rightly understood, only when based on that *Theism* which is a constituent element of Christianity; and when giving their full, undiminished authority to the doctrines of Redemption and Reconciliation, of Faith, Repentance, and Sanctification.

XIII.

We shall now deduce, from the foregoing, some consequences, first with reference to individuals, and next to the Christian community.

If it is true that the individual character of Christ forms the vital, central point of Christianity, and that the power of this character, its efficacy for Redemption, Reconciliation, and Sanctification, consists in the perfect union therein displayed, of the Divine with the human nature;—it follows, that now, as eighteen hundred years ago, men can become Christians only by entering into a living communion with this character, and through it with God; and can participate in the full benefits of Christianity only as far as they persevere with growing steadfastness in this communion;—as Christ becomes more and more a living existence within them, pervading their whole life, and calling forth within them a higher nature, like unto his own. This is the spiritual glorification of Christ, of which all Scripture breathes; his glorification in the hearts and lives of individuals, and thus, in all mankind. But admission into this communion of life with Christ, and perseverance therein, depend upon Faith, or rather, this *is* Faith. Faith, however, is no isolated principle, but is necessarily preceded by Acknowledgment and Repentance of Sin, which alone can conduct to Christ as a Redeemer and

Reconciler; and followed by Regeneration and Sanctification, the necessary results of receiving Christ as a new principle of life. This is the mode by which, according to the Christian economy, the sinner is justified before God, and received into the adoption of a son. Salvation offered by God through Christ, on the one side, and its reception through faith, on the other;—these two fundamental ideas remain always the same, however the form and language, in which we bring them before us, may vary with the necessities of the times.

If then the person of the Redeemer is the true object of Christian Faith, it appears as if those who received its immediate impression enjoyed an infinite advantage over all succeeding generations, and especially over us of later days. Hence has arisen, in many individuals of simple piety, a longing for the immediate presence and society of Christ, and a deep regret not to have been found worthy of those privileges which were enjoyed by his contemporaries. This feeling is founded on a natural and true appreciation of the power of personal impressions. But there is another side of the question, and the more important one for us, which we must not overlook. Faith is the result not of the Lord's bodily presence to the senses, but of his spiritual presence to the mind. The greatest among the Apostles had never beheld Christ with his bodily eyes, or if even he had so beheld him, he was resolved to know him no more according to the flesh, but only according to the spirit. And as Christ was still present in spirit to Paul, and to those other followers who believed in him in the period immediately following his removal from earth, so may he yet be to us. That which was delivered to Paul, by word of mouth, through the visible manifestation of Christ, we possess in the testimony of Scripture; in whose records, whatever may be said to the contrary, the divine form of the Lord stands, distinct and faith-inspiring, before the candid, unperverted mind; the spirit of Christ, by which these records are pervaded, is not yet dead; and its

workings, of which Paul saw the beginning, are now certified to us by a thousand witnesses. In the latter point of view, indeed, we have obviously the advantage. While Paul saw only the commencement, as a pledge of what was to follow, we can trace the incalculable influence of this spirit through a period of nearly two thousand years. We know, by experience, how Christianity has changed and regenerated mankind; how it has become a sanctifying, moralizing, liberating power. We see in how many individual lives and characters Christ has had a living presence, manifold in form but the same in spirit; we perceive from history how Christianity has rendered great all nations susceptible of its influence, and how each of these, according to its natural endowments, has so received it, that, while none has been capable of embracing it as a whole, its spirit and its purposes have been, by all collectively, most grandly realized. The dull, half-enlightened eye may take offence at Christ's appearance in the form of a servant; but whoever traces the victorious progress of his spirit from century to century, after his visible presence was withdrawn, will view the testimonies relating to his history in quite a new light; and from these undeniable results, will derive the strongest evidence for their *cause*, which is no other than the personal character of Christ, as depicted in the Gospels.

In the oldest primitive records which we possess of Christ's life and works, one character under which he appears is certainly that of a Teacher. If you confine yourself to this, he will in this character teach you much that is good, great, consolatory, eternally true; you may sit as a disciple at his feet, you may examine his doctrine as a philosopher, and appropriate to your own use, either certain portions (as was done by pious heathens from the first, and by the founder of Islamism himself,) or the whole; but, even should the latter be the case, you still would not possess the whole Christ, as he has been possessed by the Apostles and all real

Christians. Doctrine, as such, depends on words or written testimony, but a merely spoken or written Christianity would be assuredly no perfect Christianity. The teacher, if a good one, is honoured and loved; but we stand independently before him, we do not give up our soul to him, or receive him within us as a new, vital principle. We seek from him information, satisfaction for our understanding, direction in certain actions; but the great object with which Religion is concerned is Life, the *whole* Life. Life can proceed only from Life; and only in so far as you understand Christ as Life, can he become to you the giver, the Prince of Life.

Christ also, as the Scriptures bear witness, delivered and exemplified a Moral Law; and here again he stands alone in his supremacy. The eternal laws which slumber in the human breast, were expressed by him with a clearness and power which belongs to no other, and engraved on the hearts of mankind with "such fiery characters as lightning on the rocks inscribeth;" he also impressed on these words the seal of life and action; and up to the present day he is unsurpassed both as a teacher and as an example of morality. Here also you could not err, while obeying his words and following his steps; nor could you do so without strengthening your conviction that he spoke not of himself. But this very attempt, if earnestly made, will lead you at once to a deeper veneration of Christ, and a clearer knowledge of yourself. You will feel how far you remain behind him, in action even, and still more in that frame of mind from which action proceeds; you will perceive how far you are from fulfilling the great command, "to love God with all your strength, and your neighbour as yourself," as it was fulfilled by Christ to his latest breath; and, if not wholly deficient in sober and earnest thought, you will acknowledge that you have no glory before God the Holy one; and instead of demanding a reward for your virtue, you will rather own yourself to be an unprofitable servant, and exclaim with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

But this very experience will send you from Christ the mere teacher and lawgiver, to Christ the Redeemer and Reconciler; to him who not only says, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," but goes even unto death under the pure impulse of divine love, and sheds his blood that we may have a pledge of the Divine mercy; that a new treaty of peace with God may be established, in which man, abandoning all idea of merit in his imperfect works, may give himself up wholly to that Divine Love as manifested in Christ, and receive in return that strength of love, that joy in all goodness, which waits not for commands, but *does*, *before* the command is given, and *more* than it enjoins.

But Christ can be this Redeemer and Reconciler, only if he is that very individual character represented in the Scriptures. Only if, as the apostle Paul says, God was in him, can God through him have reconciled the world to Himself. And this character, in which the Divine and Human were so perfectly united, could not, by its very nature, be manifested in this or that detached portion of human life, or in any one single department, but must be developed in one life, one perfect, living, divine work. Its influence is therefore not directed exclusively to the amelioration of any one portion of the human nature,—of the Reason by Doctrine, of the Feelings by Love, of the Will by Law and Example,—but to the improvement and cultivation of that nature as a whole. And the full result of this influence cannot be better expressed than by the word which the Scriptures have given us, and which Luther and the Reformers have rendered familiar among us Germans,—*Faith*. Faith is not historical or doctrinal belief, it is not even what we call conviction, or the will and action proceeding from that conviction; but it is the reception of the Divine Spirit into the inner life, the conscious, voluntary, loving, self-abandonment of man to God. In this sense, Faith is the divine life which Christ was sent to communicate to mankind.

XIV.

On the same basis is founded the community of believers, the Church. The Church, so far as it corresponds to its true character, is the Kingdom of God, or, in other words, Christianity realized in the world. So far from being anything external or incidental, it necessarily results from the very nature of Christianity. The life of Christ, as the life of perfect love to God and man, binds those who share it into fellowship; and as the God revealed in Christianity is a God of Order, so must this fellowship, notwithstanding the variety of gifts and characters therein comprised, constitute *one* perfect whole, organized and developed according to essential inherent laws.

If, then, the Church is only the natural expression, the realization of Christianity, then must the Essential Characteristic of Christianity be also that of the Church. We therefore say, on the one hand,—the Church is no mere moral institution, no school for the dissemination of doctrine, or the promotion of redemption or reconciliation;—but, on the other hand,—as Christ taught and bore witness to the truth, so must the Church teach and bear witness; as he by word and deed promoted morality, so must the Church cultivate and cherish it; the Redemption and Reconciliation which he revealed, the Church should with all its powers diffuse and render available. But all must be done with reference to the central point of Christianity, which is the life and character of Christ himself; and the more all secondary objects are kept subordinate to this main principle, the better will the Church fulfil its office, the more Christian will it become. What has been said of God's relation to the world, that Preservation is a continued Creation, is applicable in this case also;—it has passed into a political maxim, that the permanence and prosperity of any institution must depend on the continuance of those causes which first called it into

existence;—and thus the Church can be preserved only by the same principle to which it owed its origin; its prosperity can be ensured only by its continued connexion with its root. In this sense the Apostle says, no other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ. In this sense he likens the Church to a living body, of which Christ is the head, the animating soul; to a temple, in which, through the spirit of Christ, the Holy One Himself dwells. In this sense also the true office of the Church is expressed, in the significant, comprehensive word, Edification; which is limited neither to instruction, to chastisement, to improvement, or to consolation; but denotes that all-embracing influence, which, upon the foundation of all that Christ was and is, has done and is yet doing for us, *builds up*, in individuals and in the community, a similar life of holiness.

If, then, without Christ there is no Christianity, so without him there can be no Church; and where he has a living presence, *there* must be a Church:—"I am the vine, ye are the branches; He who abideth in me bringeth forth much fruit; but without me ye can do nothing."

And here let us be again permitted to deduce some practical results, and to cast a glance at the present time.

First. A number of our contemporaries, who have hitherto belonged to the Catholic Church, are now earnestly occupied with the project of founding a new Church. This must be acknowledged to be a very significant symptom, which may well occasion much serious thought to parties on both this and the other side of the mountains; and the (on this occasion) somewhat empty words of Görres are yet far from having disposed of the question. This is not the place to pass a deliberate judgment on the whole affair; we will only express what arises of itself from present inquiry, though we do so at the risk of being wholly unheard amid the tumult of the day. It is not necessary to say that these are the words of a Protestant, who abides by the old protest against

priestly domination and interference, against the exclusive bigotry and jesuitical spirit of Romanism, and especially against all actual perversions of Christianity; and who holds that the spiritual sword must not be laid aside, so long as these corruptions endure. But the present question relates, not to this old opposition, but to a new and still problematical position; and to those by whom this has been taken up, we address ourselves in all goodwill, on the assumption that they also are willing to hear what is said in sincerity. Let him who aspires to be the founder of a new religious community reflect, not *once*, not superficially, but repeatedly and earnestly, what is involved in the task! It is a great and holy work, incalculable in its results for whole generations: but it is also a labour of toil and sorrow, a work for which human sagacity and human strength are insufficient; which can be accomplished only by the counsel and power of God, and when He, the ruler of history, prepares the way for its reception. Thus alone can it be enabled to resist the storms of life. And in the next place, a foundation is laid for the Church; and besides it can no other way be laid. Whoever would establish a *Christian* community, may build thereon; and he who does otherwise, will find that he has built upon the sand. But this is not all; even he who adopts this sure foundation, must also follow in his work the order which Christ has appointed; and this, for a sinful race, can only be through the consciousness of Sin to Repentance, through Repentance to Faith, through Faith to Sanctification, through Sanctification to Salvation. Above all, the assumption of personal merit, or the righteousness of works, must be excluded; and every thing referred to the free grace of God. A Christian reformation can only take place by the development of Christianity into fuller, deeper efficacy; but now, as eighteen hundred years ago, Christianity commences with the words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This precept, and the means of salvation pointed out, may probably

appear antiquated to men of the present day; and modern speculation, in which the first condition—the acknowledgment of Sin—is wanting, will probably reject them; but this is and remains the Christian method, and whoever would found a Christian community must adopt it. If modern philosophy emancipates itself from Christianity, let it attempt on its own basis to establish a religious, or, more properly, a moral community; and thus practically test its own principles, by comparison of this community with the Church. We shall then at least have something clear and distinct; a mixture of incongruous elements cannot in any case be permanent, or even temporarily beneficial.

Secondly. There will at all times be corruptions in the church, deficiencies and excresences, unbelief and superstition. These must not be spared or passed over, and we praise him who boldly enters the lists against them; let him, however, not rest satisfied with destroying error, but immediately substitute for it the clear truth; or rather, let him, by bringing this truth to light, annihilate falsehood. So acted our German Reformers, and we cannot better describe this true mode of spiritual warfare, than in the words of their greatest warrior, Luther, the Hero of Faith:—"He is no wise teacher who says, This is a lie, and yet gives no certain truth in its place. It avails little to point out falsehood, yet be unable or unwilling to show us falsehood's great detector—Truth. Whoever will destroy falsehood with a strong arm, must substitute for it obvious, certain, enduring truth. For Falsehood will not retreat in terror till bright unchangeable Truth appears."

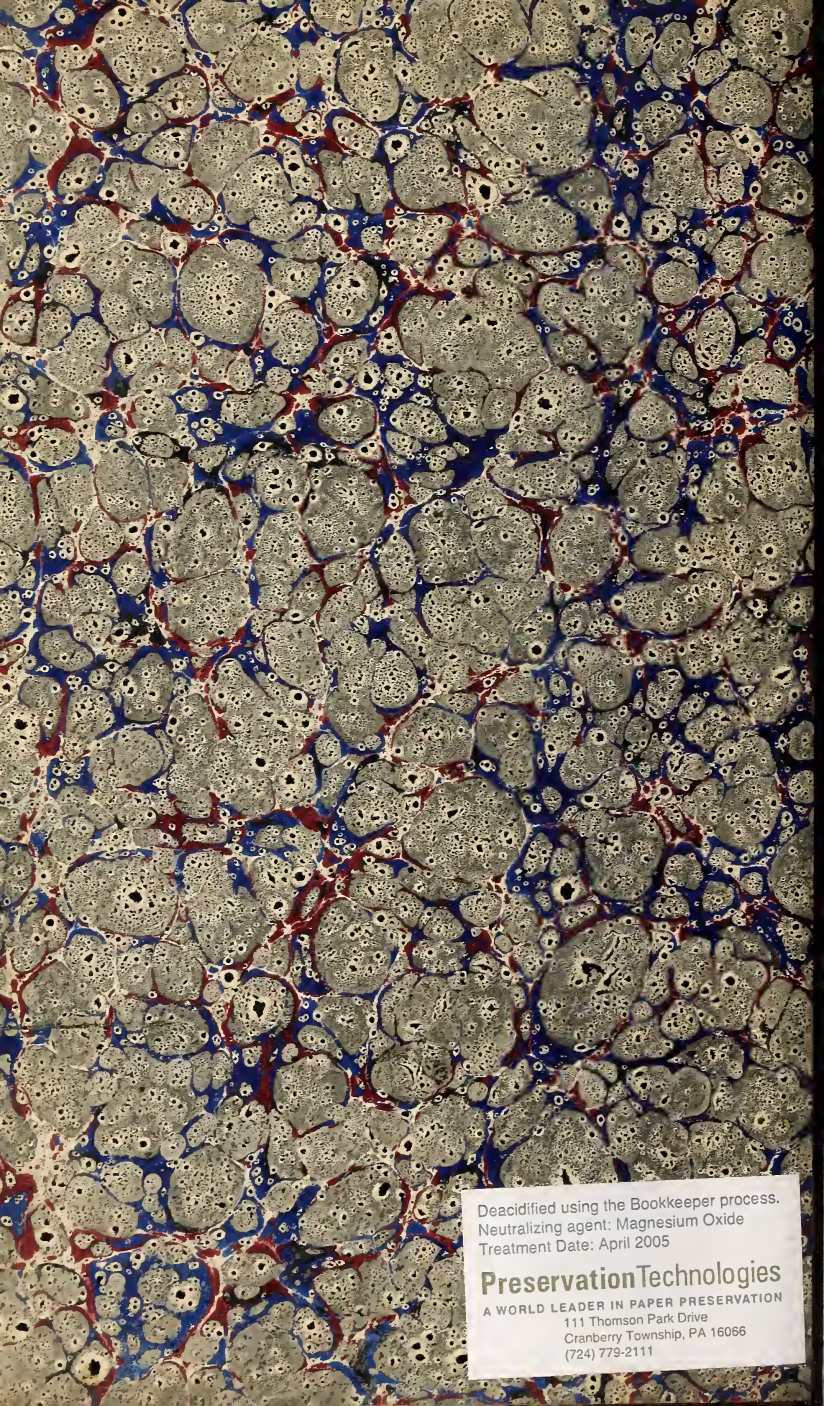
Thirdly. It is the duty of every Christian community already in existence, to remain firm on the true foundation; to maintain its connexion with its true Head, that thus it may attain the stature and strength of maturity. Much is said in these days of the possibility of a union between the two great ecclesiastical parties of the West—the Catholic and the

Evangelical. Truly, a great and glorious idea! An idea to which the patriot, the Christian, would gladly accede! But who that is in the least acquainted with the hard realities of our religious and ecclesiastical position, can delude himself with the hope that such a consummation is near? Who can believe it that beholds the revived energy of the papal system, the efforts of Jesuitism, the forcible renewal of so many things which long since seemed abrogated by common consent, the wide spreading differences in religious opinions and tendencies, the independence and diversity of individual views, which render a great organic combination in our day impossible? We willingly admit that such a free, all-embracing union is the crowning triumph of Christianity; but for this triumph our age is not prepared. The religious, moral, and political conditions therein involved are yet far distant; great events are perhaps also required, such as no human foresight can calculate, far less hasten. The present age seems to be only the preparation for what we have above denominated the Church of the future,—the truly universal church. If, however, this should ever be realized, it must still retain the same great central principle; it can only be a fuller, more expansive development of those powers and gifts which Christ introduced among men; of what now exist, only the extraneous, the false, the unchristian portion will be rejected, while all that is excellent will be preserved, under a more perfect form. One of our existing communities boasts especially of the Gospel, the other prides itself chiefly in a grand highly organized ecclesiastical system. Well, then, let each develope its own peculiar advantages, but at the same time let each endeavour to appropriate whatever is really excellent in the other. Let the one expand from its centre, and the other penetrate more deeply into the inward meaning of its external forms. Thus, points of concidence will assuredly be found; and whenever Time's dial strikes the mighty hour,

then will this partition-wall also fall before Him who formerly overthrew a far mighter partition, and of Two made One. But fall it will not, till the living Head of the Church enters upon his full supremacy, and in him and his gospel all differences are merged and reconciled.

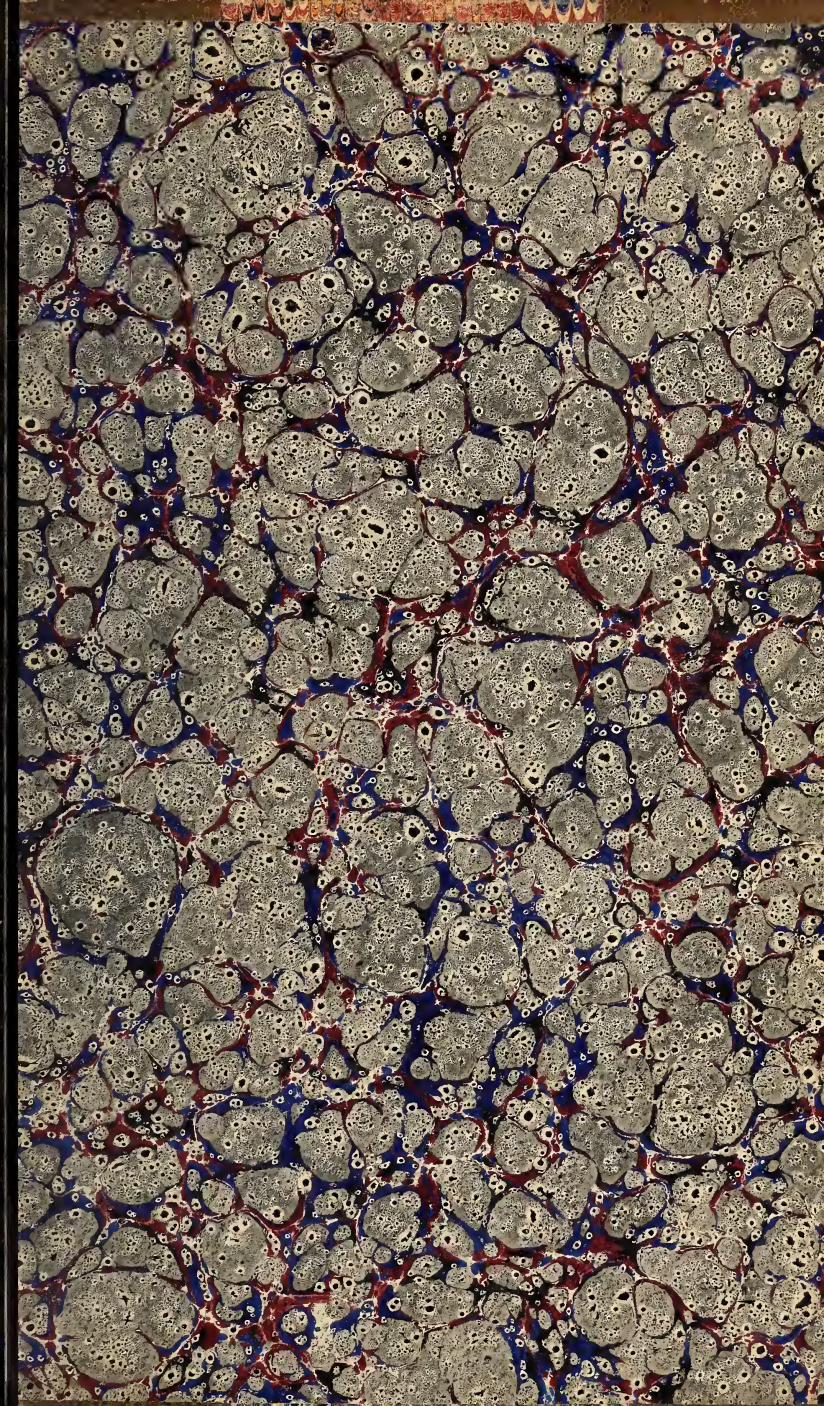
THE END.

Morton & Chapman, Printers, 2, Crane-court, Fleet-street.



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 085 278 8